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SOCIAL SCHEMES



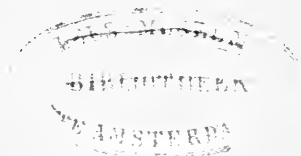
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SOCIAL SCIENCE
AND
SOCIAL SCHEMES

BY
JAMES M^CCLELLAND

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PREFACE



THE opinions expressed in the following pages are not intended to flatter any class of the community. Nothing seems more certain than that each class is identified with interests which render it more or less insensible to the claims of the others, and that as a consequence the true facts of questions pertaining to social intercourse may and often are distorted by these class biases. If there are a few fundamental principles to which all action can be ascribed, any inquiry, however imperfect or incomplete, which contributes to elucidate them, must be advantageous. Identity of conclusions is not to be expected, and mine are scarcely destined for popularity with

the masses, yet I believe they conform to the absolute factors of the case, and that the more they are realised and acted upon, with such modifications as more exhaustive investigations may suggest, the nearer shall we approach that time when "earth shall reach its earthly best."

JAMES McCLELLAND.

BELFAST, *September, 1894.*

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SOCIAL SCIENCE.

Every science begins by accumulating observations, and presently generalises these empirically ; but only when it reaches the stage at which its empirical generalisations are included in a rational generalisation, does it become developed science. Astronomy has already passed through its successive stages ; first, collections of facts ; then inductions from them ; and lastly, deductive interpretations of these, as corollaries from a universal principle of action among masses in space. Accounts of structures and tabulations of strata grouped and compared have led gradually to the assigning of various classes of geological changes to igneous and aqueous actions ; and it is now tacitly admitted that geology becomes a science-proper, only as fast as such changes are explained in terms of those natural processes which have arisen in the cooling and solidifying Earth, exposed to the Sun's heat and the action of the Moon upon its ocean. The science of life has been, and is still exhibiting a like series of steps ; the evolutions of organic forms at large, is being affiliated on physical actions in operation from the beginning ; and the vital phenomena each organism presents are coming to be understood as connected sets of changes, in parts formed of matters that are affected by certain forces and disengage other forces. So is it with wind. . . . Sociology, too, represented down to recent times only by stray ideas about social organisation scattered through the masses of worthless gossip furnished us by historians, is coming to be recognised by some as also a science.

HERBERT SPENCER'S *Data of Ethics*.

The mistake of the writers on the science of society is to regard existing social and sociological laws, the existing constitution of society, as either unchangeable, or not to be changed except extremely slowly. True, there could not well be a science on any other assumption, though there might be a history, a description of the phases and stages through which societies have passed ; and therefore the still greater mistake of those writers is, perhaps, the notion that there is any sociology at all, when the past career of nations and course of civilisation is so capricious, and the future course of social as of general evolution admittedly so little predictable.

WILLIAM GRAHAM, M.A.—*Creed of Science*.

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

PHILOSOPHERS and thinkers are divided in opinion as to the possibility of there being a science of society with laws at once definite, consistent, and as capable of prevision in regard to men's actions in association with each other and their sequences, as the laws which have been laid down as governing the world of nature. By those who look with distrust upon the attempt which has been made by such master minds as Herbert Spencer's to establish such a connection between human nature and conduct and its natural consequences as shall justify the enunciation of laws to which they, to all appearance, respond, it is contended that science, depending as it does for the validity of its laws on the constant recurrence of a series of identical facts and their so far as ascertained unchanging sequences, can have no validity or reality in a sphere where these conditions are admittedly impossible of realisation. The facts of human

history, be they ever so faithfully recorded, are valueless for the purpose of guiding us in the constructing of such laws, because they can never repeat themselves. The individuals who compose society can furnish no clue, because no two of them are identical with each other or with any of the units that have contributed to form the society of preceding ages, for nature with progressive and unceasing change renders duplication unknown. Even a parallel they assert between two periods cannot be instituted with any reliance on its being approximately accurate, for with mankind knowledge has so rapidly increased in range and precision that occasionally a decade is sufficient to revolutionise our conceptions of the possibilities of human destiny, and entirely modify and enlarge the ideas of morality and duty, so that while we are deducing laws from our present knowledge, a new regime is ushered in ; old influences lose their power, and old conceptions are for ever supplanted by the more extended volume of knowledge, and the higher ideals evolved. Identity, therefore, being non-existent, and similarities between our units so close as to be valuable being also lacking, where, they triumphantly ask, is the data which will form a stable basis for a social science? There is much

appearance of reason in this view of the case, but it is probable that it originates in, and owes its continuance to, a misconception of the true meaning of the term law when used in connection with science. There are really no absolute and final laws in any branch of science. What, by common consent, we designate laws, are merely formulas expressive of the sequences and relationships of the facts which have been accumulated by the most careful and extended observation. We cannot demonstrate scientifically that there is any inherent necessity in, nor any power compelling, the continuance of the particular order which has, so far as our observation goes, prevailed up till the present ; it is quite impossible for us to prove, as Karl Pearson demonstrates in his "Grammar of Science," that a cataclasm may not engulf the universe to-morrow, though our past experience gives an overwhelming probability against such a cataclasm. It is well, therefore, to clearly understand that our capacity to construct laws for any branch of science is limited strictly by our observation of the particular order of events in the past, and the frequency with which they have occurred without variation, and from that we proceed to an inference, strong in proportion to the period over which the

recurrence has been observed, that it is an invariable routine—such, however, is never provable. We may even proceed from what we have observed to recur with unvarying regularity to deduce laws to explain other observed phenomena which will so harmonise with the phenomena as to be accepted as a satisfactory explanation by the normal mind; but it must always be remembered that these theories are liable at any moment to be disproved by the addition of fresh factors, which, though slight, and, at first sight, unimportant, may change the whole conception of the subject. Examples are numerous of practical experience demonstrating the fallacy of theories sustained by the strongest analogies, and illustrations are common of the important results which have accrued from the more minute and critical examination of the facts. The well-known instance of the difficulty with which the mechanical theory of heat superseded the caloric theory, and the great development of the steam engine which immediately became practicable, may be cited as an example.

In the region of science, therefore, we may confidently assert that no positive and final laws are possible, and as our means of acquiring and recording exact information

become more perfected, the increased volume of knowledge will enable more comprehensive formulas or laws to be framed, so that assurance of finality cannot be given at any time ; there is no "fatal necessity" in the physical laws no more than in social laws. Their validity and permanence are commensurate only with the extent and accuracy which has characterised the collection of the data, and in no branch can it be asserted that investigation has been so exhaustive and exact, that we cannot hope for more light. Absolute prevision being beyond the claim made for the laws of any science by the true scientist, it is difficult to understand upon what rational basis a place in science can be denied to those conditional laws of society which are formulated from the data collected regarding the history of man—his physical, psychological and sociological development. In each of these three aspects we possess, undoubtedly, authentic information of the progress which man has made, and from them we who believe in a social science deduce not only the order of evolution, but the causes which have contributed to make modifications imperative to existence. That physical improvement and specialisation of organism was a necessary precedent to

mental elevation which would make possible a social system, and that this system would, with every increase of mental which would be accompanied by moral improvement, become more nearly perfect, only needs to be stated to be accepted as an axiom. It is impossible for us ever to know the gulf which separates barbarism from civilisation, for while we might, by transplanting existing barbaric nations to the conditions necessary to hasten their evolution, and thus in a comparatively short time force their development to higher types, it would not aid us in deciding the question.

Primitive man had to win every step of his advancement, and the necessity of advancing was forced on him by the altering conditions of life. It would only be when the niggardliness of uncultivated nature no longer sufficed for the sustenance of all the organic life on the globe, and man had to prove his supremacy over other animals if he was to retain dominion, that his mental resources would be exerted, and by their exercise strengthened and developed, until the possibilities of modern civilisation would be reached. It may, however, be asserted that while the general course of progress is easily traced in the footprints

that have been made by our race in the sands of time, yet particulars of the details of their actions is not so easily ascertained, and by reason of this want of precision no definite forecast for the future can be made. What do we really know, it may be said, of the facts underlying historical records; these too frequently are ignored in the desire to give exact biographical details of the leading personages, which enable us to form about as correct an estimate of the real life of the period as the inflated and exaggerated utterances of the popular demagogue would give us a true picture of the condition of the masses. This is largely true, but there is still in our historical records and in our personal experience indications of one fundamental principle underlying all human conduct, a principle engrafted in our nature, essential to our existence, and while occasionally distorted to an extent which makes us shrink from acknowledging its power, is not only the main spring of our progress, but the salvation of our race. That principle is self-preservation. In civilised society its action is greatly modified from that current under primitive conditions, but it is the real power which rules the world of men. No longer

in the original sense is it self-preservation, for the danger is not now to life but to fortune, and it is in fostering the conditions which will contribute to our own aggrandisement, careless of how our neighbours may fare, that we now carry on the unending struggle.

A great amount of spurious sentiment is indulged in over this what reformers call the selfishness of man. To it is attributed most of the misery and suffering in the world, but, notwithstanding its unamiable aspect when viewed cursorily and designated self-love and selfishness, there is no more important principle implanted in the human breast. From it, pure and unmixed, there are more advantages than ever could accrue from love of your neighbour which looks so much better to profess. Every step of human progress may be placed to its credit, and with its disappearance enterprise would die and mankind become stagnant. The basis of all the manufacturing trade and commerce in the country is self-love—men do not invest their capital in mills for the sake of giving the people an opportunity of earning a livelihood; they do not put down plant for the building of ships and the constructing of engines for the love of giving

employment ; they do not import the products of other countries simply for the pleasure of seeing the natives of their own enjoying them, nor do they export the products of our own for the gratification of their love for the foreigners, and their desire that they should be happy ; all these undertakings, all the works in the world, are prompted not by love of neighbour but by love of self, and the conviction that the path selected is the shortest way to the increasing of their portion of the root of all evil. The result to the community is the same as if it were done solely for their benefit, as no man can further his individual interests in a lawful manner without benefiting society at large. Nothing but our desire to further our own fortunes would induce us to take the trouble to bring the necessaries of life to our neighbours' doors, and the distributing of the provisions through a city is surely more satisfactorily accomplished when inspired by desire of gain than by any considerations for the happiness and comfort of our neighbour. In actual life there is no room for sentimental considerations, and there is little necessity for them either in the present age. At no previous period in the history of the world have the conveniences and com-

forts of life been so great and so extensively diffused. The labourer of to-day enjoys comforts which were unknown to kings a few centuries ago, and with the facilities for education, free libraries, and art galleries, the road to learning has become to all, as nearly as possible, a royal one, and there being no caste distinctions in our country, there is no position which the humblest born may not aspire to. The guerilla warfare of primitivism, it is true, is superseded, and civilisation places all in pleasanter conditions, but a contest none the less real because more refined continues, and under its domination men are compelled to attend to their own self-interest to the exclusion of all others with the same fidelity as in the earliest ages. That in the course of evolution self-sacrificing personalities have flashed across the social sky is admitted, but they are classed as meteors whose erratic course cannot be predicted nor their recurrence counted on with certainty, so that they may be conveniently eliminated from our data without vitiating the result. No doubt their influence will have a certain effect upon the surrounding phenomena, and their track may threaten destruction to many a time-honoured custom, but as

nothing for long prevails which is not established in reason and confirmed in equity, we can look with complacency alike upon the philanthropic but mistaken attacks of the benevolent, and the mercenary and misleading assaults of the charlatan. For there is no subject in which quackery and spurious sentiment is more common, because, being one of universal interest, in which prince and peasant alike have an every-day experience, a premium is placed on its practices, and there are no end of Joseph Surfaces who seek to maintain a "reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense." The time also is particularly favourable for its prosecution, as the schoolmaster has got abroad, and each has obtained just that amount of knowledge which enables him to give an unhesitating opinion on its every problem. Had they drunk more deeply of the Pierian Spring, the force and freshness of their decisions would have been destroyed, and they would have been landed into that abyss of doubt and indecision which is characteristic of those whose acquirements enable them to take cognisance not only of the proximate effects but of the most distant consequences of proposed reforms.

This is the difference between the bar-parlour orator who will tell you most positively what ought to be done, and the statesman who has considered the question in all its bearings, and in relationship to the entire scheme of policy, and is still undecided as to the most advisable course to pursue. No dogmatic opinion is possible to him who, with a trained understanding and an appreciation of the daily accretions which our knowledge is receiving, approaches a subject, not as a special pleader, but with the sole desire of ascertaining the truth and following wheresoever it leads. This, unfortunately, is too often not the spirit in which those who desire to renovate society approach the task. However honest their intentions in general may be, and of that I have no desire to offer any opinion, they usually start from *a priori* grounds and immediately proceed to demonstrate how a proposed reform, usually a most superficial one, would eliminate all injustice out of the universe and herald the Golden Age. They as a rule have an exaggerated conception of the evils to be remedied, a very slight acquaintance with the subject, and a positive conviction that some single panacea which they advocate

will be all the reform that is required. Considering that there are before the world at present at least a dozen schemes for its remodelling and the establishment of perfect justice, happiness, and contentment, and that the disciples of each scheme have no great confidence in the efficacy of any but their own, or conviction of the honesty of the advocates of the most of the others, we may be well pardoned for subjecting all the plans to the most rigid criticism before identifying ourselves with any of them. In fact we are tempted to dub as empirics those who dilate on the diseases of the body social, and the simplicity of its cure by their patent decoction. If it is diseased, no single remedy will suffice for its cure, but those who have most carefully diagnosed the symptoms assert that they but indicate infantile complaints which it will outgrow in the natural course of events without the aid of noxious draughts or dangerous operations. They are strengthened in this opinion by the well-known fact that since men first began to live in association the progress has been enormous, and the constant tendency is to establish higher standards of comfort. This, they are convinced,

shows that the organism is healthy, that its development is satisfactory, and that such changes as the anarchist, the socialist, the communist, the land nationaliser, and the co-operator, in its modern acceptation, would bring us are neither necessary nor desirable.

In the following pages I shall endeavour to show briefly the natural laws which govern men in association, how they act and react on each other in such a way that interference, so far from being beneficial to all, would frequently be unjust to the most deserving for the least valuable portion of humanity, and I shall review and demonstrate the fallacy of the leading reforms that have been proposed and advocated with all the fervour of those who aggrandise themselves by discovering for the masses the injustices which they suffer and which they are wholly unaware of, until pressed home by the brave-sounding, but usually nonsensical words of the democratic orator. There is no subject in which cheap popularity is more easily attainable than by playing courtier to the democracy, but it is surely advisable that we should occasionally let the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth have an airing. However unpleasant this may be, I am

certain it is a more substantial proof of friendship to indicate errors than to disguise them. The statement of the facts of the case and their inevitable consequences, the demonstration of the destructive tendency of the unnatural interference with private rights which is urgently demanded by those whose minds have become so permeated with the conceived advantage of a certain plan that honour and honesty appear as if ready to be laid as a sacrifice on the altar, is necessary; and, if in pursuance of this purpose we find it impossible to avoid enunciating doctrines which must appear hard-hearted and unsympathetic, it must not be forgotten that in deducing conclusions from ascertained facts we are unable to control them. However much we might deplore certain laws, we should never allow our individual feeling to find expression, but carefully repressing sentiment, and depending solely on our data, without fear or favour indicate the true and expose the false conception of the subject. While doing so we may be careful to state exactly the data upon which our laws are based, so that in the event of an extension of this, its influence could be at once assimilated to the system. There is no subject

in which more possibilities of extension exist, both on account of its comparative modernness as a science and the plasticity of the units, and there is certainly none in which constant introspection is more necessary for getting at the actual truth. We must always keep before us the indubitable fact that while in all sciences the errors due to the position of the observer must be taken into account, and frequently indeed, like in astronomy, the same facts must be noted by observers thousands of miles apart, so that from the results of the two independent observations the inaccuracy may be reduced to the minimum, in none is it more important that we should strenuously endeavour to eliminate our own personalities, and in none is it so difficult to take the result of the observations of others, and placing them side by side with our own, arrive at the true state of the case.

This is, of course, due to the fact that our own interests are usually involved in the answers we give, and that we have also inherited traditions which contribute to our mental attitudes and determine the positions we shall assume in respect to every question. There is also the complementary source of error in the inaccuracy

of our judgments of our fellowmen. Just as we are rarely all that we in our partiality consider ourselves, so others are as often a great amount better than we give them credit for ; unless, indeed, when they happen to be particularly in accord with our opinions and sentiments, when we extend to them a part of the charity which we give to ourselves. By making an allowance for these factors the impartial and educated man can approach accuracy in the laws which govern social life. At any rate he will have all the elements necessary for formulating such laws, and pronouncing a valuable opinion upon all proposed reforms ; and whilst he will probably arrive at conclusions which will ill harmonise with the hopes of the enthusiast or the expectations roused by the agitator, he will be able to indicate the direction that improvement must be in to be permanent, and so render a service to the best interests of society, which, though less appreciated by the majority, will be much more valuable than all the vapourings of would-be reformers.

THE UNITS.

“ Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies ;
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and Man is.”

TENNYSON.

THE UNITS.

IF you ask a chemist to describe the nature of a certain substance, he proceeds to reduce it to its component parts, and to give you the exact proportion in which these enter into its total ;—there is usually a residuum which defies his analysis, and which is represented by the percentage necessary to complete his assumed total parts. In like manner, when we undertake to describe society, we must also reduce it to its component parts, which are the individuals or units of which it is composed ; we shall also find a residuum which will not be so distinct as to be included under a definite head in our analysis, but which will require to be indicated to make up the total. The units of society, though characterised by a certain amount of sameness, are in reality very varied, but like other elements they have exact combining affinities which they have unconsciously conformed to, since they first began to live in association, and which are the essence of its continuance.

It is conceivable that as originally constituted, the possibility of identity amongst the units was present, but the different circumstances by which they were surrounded, facilitating in the one case growth and development, and in the other stunting and dwarfing the natural possibilities, early introduced varieties which would be intensified with the flight of time, and the continuance of the more diversified environments which would necessarily ensue from the progression of the one, and the stagnation of the other. Even where the rates of development were not so far apart, there would be sufficient diversity amongst the surroundings to produce the distinct and irreconcilable personalities which we find amongst the inhabitants of the most limited areas, and who have, to all outward appearance, been subjected to the same influences. Our conceptions of right and wrong are largely the result of the country in which we are born, and our conduct in the minor affairs of life will be decided in the main by our position in the social scale, which gives the boundaries to our knowledge, and regulates the canons to which we submit our actions. Antecedents, training and environment, form indeed the triple cord which binds men; they are the factors which mould their lives and

colour their characters, and they are connected in such indissoluble bonds, that when we know the first, we can with a great amount of certainty foretell the other two. Not only so, but if we knew the complete history of any one individual, we would know the complete history of the universe. The complete history would involve of course not the record of his life since birth, but all the causes which have since the earliest time contributed to his production. Each is but the resultant of a long series of causes, linked inextricably with the causes which have been moulding the other entities, and extending into a complete chain, embracing all the creation: a change in any part of which would have been represented by an entirely different present. If effect follows upon cause, the present is the only possible outcome of the past, and the future is already decided by the present. Individually and collectively, therefore, we are indissolubly linked to the past, inheriting in the aggregate the whole of its virtues and its vices; its material, and physical, and mental progress. Each, however, possesses distinct traits, having been subjected only to a small portion of the entire circumstances which re-

present human experience, and their conclusions being entirely dependent upon this, they are of course far from being comprehensive. It is not difficult to understand, either, how there happens to be such dissimilar views arrived at on the same subject, and with apparently equally educated, and equally intelligent, and fair-minded men. It is owing to the mental or social bias from which even those desirous of being impartial, cannot entirely emancipate themselves; this is possibly inherited, and is strengthened by class prejudices which prevent them being able to dissociate themselves from their immediate interests, and obtain an impersonal view of the subject. Thus, when a certain subject recommends itself primarily to any mind for study, it is apt to assume to that mind proportions entirely at variance with its intrinsic importance. The mental equilibrium is disturbed; the subject becomes a sort of Aaron's rod, and gradually swallows up all others; and to the mind thus distorted, it seems the one important factor to the proper understanding of life; its promulgation becomes a solemn duty, and it is confidently expected that its acceptance by humanity at large, as a cardinal article of faith, will be the precursor of the Golden Age. Nearly

all proposed social reforms emanate from martyrs to single ideas ; the undue preponderance of the one train of thought preventing the other factors receiving such consideration as their importance demands, and thus the whole renovation of society is made to appear to depend upon the alteration of some relatively unimportant detail. The exponents of these marvellous theories for not only the preservation of life, but for the amelioration of its least desirable features, are the residuum which defy our analysis of society. They are not amenable to the ordinary rules of logic, and their enthusiasm over their pet project blinds them when honest to the counteracting disadvantage which would accompany the change, which too often could only be brought about by the violation of every principle upon which we depend for the permanency of combination. As each new theory is propounded, the injustices of present conditions exemplified, and the efficiency of the proposed remedy demonstrated, we can only marvel how our poor forefathers survived in ignorance of their hard lots, and assume that their contented and happy existence was owing to the absence of those bright philanthropic geniuses in modern days called social reformers.

Leaving this residuum we find that although we cannot proclaim identity amongst our units, there are very close similarities, and very cogent reasons for supposing that in the primal instincts and impulses, and in the ultimate desires all men are equal. That their actions are so dissimilar in apparently similar circumstances is due solely to the difference of inherited qualities, modified or intensified, as the case may be, by their environments. The importance of these two factors cannot be over-estimated, and yet they can scarcely be correctly ascertained. Notwithstanding the painstaking and exhaustive researches of the great German scientist, Wiesmann, into the question of heredity, the subject is still beset with difficulties, and scarcely capable of definiteness. His investigations have resulted in the germ plasm theory, from which it would appear that the germ is continuous and unmodifiable, and is transmitted with all its racial distinctions from sire to son, and that it is impossible for variations due to environments to be so assimilated as to be transmitted. There is of course the recognition of the possibility of the fusion of the two germ plasms, and a consequent modification resulting; but it must surely be granted that if the environments through

successive generations have not called for the exercise of qualities which might exist in the original plasm, while other requirements induced in the individuals the exercise of different powers, the dormancy in the one case, and the activity in the other would lead ultimately to a modification in the inherited proclivities. On no other assumption can we account for the aptitude which is frequently shown by children for the class of work to which their immediate ancestors have been accustomed, as certainly it has not been transmitted from a long past, when the very conditions of life were incompatible with the possession of such qualities. If such is not the case, and, as the law of heredity seems to establish, out of a bad and improvident stock no amount of training, no duration of time, will ever eradicate the undesirable and unamiable qualities, how can we explain the prodigious changes which have taken place in man's nature, how can we account for progression at all if with each generation we start precisely with the same original conditions and tendencies, and have to undergo the same slow course of elimination and improvement? If permanent improvement is impossible, and our task, Tantalus-like, a never ending and ever beginning one, are

we justified in making the conditions of present life such as shall ensure our successors having to grapple with the same never-ending problem? The truth seems to be that the environment which has led to modifications in individual cases is likely to be experienced by the succeeding generations to an equal, if not greater, extent; so that if while the environments and conditions of life were unaltered, men would necessarily remain identical and stationary with the slowly evolving conditions, a corresponding evolution in character takes place. It is the growth of population which is the principal incentive to progress, because as the world is called on to support the increasing numbers, man is forced to consider how he can best aid nature in responding to the demand; and the knowledge thus acquired is the origin of all advancement. Once started on the road of progress, their wants increase in volume and in refinement, and men's mental powers are developed, for there is nothing so effective as necessity for ensuring invention and improvement. That we in this age occupy a position so much in advance of preceding ages is not due to any mental superiority amongst the existing units of society, but is the consequence of the very rich

legacies which we have inherited from the former inhabitants of the earth—legacies which have been gradually growing in volume and value throughout the centuries, and which we will pass on to posterity with our added experience. These legacies consist of accumulated data, extended observation, careful experiment, and where not actually established beyond doubt, suggestive theories which may be confirmed or corrected by us in our subsequent investigations. We take up the skein where the most advanced of our predecessors have left it, with the task of unravelling it greatly simplified by their efforts. If we for a moment consider what our position would be, were it possible for each generation, as it passed away, to, with miserly penuriousness, carry with it the knowledge it had acquired, and leave its successors to collect for themselves all data, make all the necessary experiments, and undertake all investigations *de novo*, we would at once realise that notwithstanding man's mental superiority, he would never progress beyond the rudest state of barbarism. It is in the power to transmit to posterity the accumulated experience that the continuity of development depends, and if our present knowledge were destroyed by a vandalic incursion, to restore it would

take centuries, even with the power of transmission. Our vantage ground is inheritance, and it therefore is impossible to over-estimate the importance of mental and moral characteristics in connection with social science. These being the product of centuries of growth, and being concerned with all the questions pertaining to human life and destiny, naturally form a mental boundary for each which it is highly probable he personally has very little power to control or alter. The conclusions which each will arrive at on the same subject and with apparently the same information, are usually very different, but an approximation can be made by taking into account the country inhabited, its moral standard and mental attainments, together with the position of the individual, which will indicate his general conformity, or otherwise, to the leading canons of the society in which he exists, and the minor circle within which his personal interests are confined.

One primal instinct we can always rely on with absolute certainty as being present in all men, and that is self-preservation. This might now-a-days be called more correctly almost self-interest, because it is usually our material welfare which has to be conserved instead of the preserva-

tion of our existence. This principle gives the colour to all human action, and that the results are so varied, is due to the different answers which each gives to the question of what will best serve their interests. All our actions, let them appear involuntary or otherwise, are in reality the natural outcome of our experiences. In some cases the frequency with which like circumstances have occurred gives an appearance of spontaneity to conduct, while in others the rarity makes reflection imperative, but in all comparisons and conclusion precede action, however involuntary they may seem.

Practically, therefore, the question which each answers before taking action, is the most advisable method of conserving his own best interest ; and the different methods adopted for accomplishing this, the first end of civilised man, will depend entirely on inheritance, training and experience, although the latter is probably a necessary accompaniment of the two former. There are, however, many cases in which we might, without great risk to our reputation, hazard a definite prediction as to how, in given circumstances, men would act. For instance, if we saw a man passing along a railway track, and a locomotive coming from the opposite

direction on the same line, we might, with safety, predict that the law of self-preservation would ensure him immediately leaving the line. In one case out of ten thousand we might find our prediction falsified, but we should on investigation discover that there was a factor in that particular case not normal in all human beings, and which therefore our generalisation did not cover. It might be due to a physical defect, such as the loss of sight ; it might be a mental defect which occasionally manifests itself by a very erroneous conception of the nature of things, or it might be a sociological one, such as a feeling of being out of harmony with the rest of society, or a sense of unjust treatment or unmerited obloquy. In whatever way, however, the abnormality was explained, it would not affect the general validity of our statement as to the impulses and consequent actions which in ordinary circumstances would follow from such an approaching train. It is therefore our power of ascertaining all the factors of the case that will determine the measure of our accuracy, as the primal motive is identical, and only modified by the evolution of the social instincts. Those in whom it is least apparent are usually the most cultured and refined, and its dormancy in

their case is due to the substitution of a higher ideal than the merely personal. As civilisation reaches higher and still higher levels, it ceases to be evidenced at all in the grosser forms, because the conditions are so changed, and so far from the struggle with many being for existence, it becomes only for the obtaining of the greatest pleasure and happiness which life can afford. This becomes the one end of existence, how different soever the means for effecting it may be. Examples, apparently irreconcilable with this dictum, may easily be given, but they are only apparently so, for in reality their seeming incompatibility is due to our limited knowledge of the whole facts of the case. Many sensitive and heroic men there are who would suffer less by immolating themselves for the benefit of a number, than what they would suffer by allowing all that might be saved by their self-sacrifice to perish ; enthusiasm and the strong consciousness of the rectitude of their cause and the importance of its teaching to humanity may inspire martyrs to bear the most exquisite refinements of torture which the perverted ingenuity of man can invent, and generous and noble natures may act in a manner which cannot be reconciled by the more phlegmatic as in keeping with this rule. The

explanation is that it is the different conceptions of what constitutes happiness that is animating them. In many the respect and esteem of their fellowmen is more essential to their happiness and enjoyment than any acquirement of fortune, or any escaping of personal danger, or even any consistency in action. Others there are who pursue their own career uninfluenced by praise ; undeterred by blame ; only gratified by accomplishing their own end, and careless who suffers so that they succeed.

The social units, therefore, although identical in primal instincts and motives, and in the ends which they have in view, vary in their actions, owing to different conceptions of the best means of furthering these identical objects. The different conceptions originate not in any original inherent variety, but in the different experiences of the units, owing to their infinitely varied surroundings through all time. The difference of environment has divided men so widely that they have appeared to naturalists not varieties of a single species but distinct species, different in colour, in stature, in general contour, in mental power, and in moral capability ; and while in its extremes it has done this, in its more limited operation it has established classes inside the

one community sharply divided from each other with different traditions, different and irreconcilable interests, and a different standard for guiding their actions. Each with a jealous eye watching the other, envying everything which appears to give them a precedence or an advantage to such an extent, that, leaving the residuum out of our consideration, we can, with a fair claim to accuracy, foretell what course will be pursued under given circumstances by individuals if we possess some particulars of their antecedents. This does not mean that the characteristics and tendencies accompanying any station are invariable, but that they are so generally consistent that the exception may be taken as proving the rule. Temperance could not long continue in brothels, nor healthy views of life in the harem.

There is another aspect of the question of antecedents and inheritance which in civilised life is most important and lends itself to little speculation. That is the accumulation of material goods which ancestors may have acquired in fierce competition and bequeathed to their immediate successors. This gives them such an advantage in the social state that they may almost be considered to have it

in their power to give the less fortunate permission to exist. Indeed to such an extent is this the case that it sometimes appears as if by some right divine they were put in possession of the indispensable necessities of life to the many to be used rightly or wrongly at their pleasure. Without the recognition of such a right of transfer there would be no stimulant to the exercise of our best powers. It is therefore clearly and indispensably necessary that such should be recognised, as its absence would destroy progress; investigation and experiments would cease, and men would languish and approximate to that existence which has always characterised Eastern nations who so early reached a high point in civilisation and refinement, but, owing to the want of incentive and security, lacked the power requisite to carry them over the dead centre, and have ever since remained stationary.

The present inheritance of our race is a developed, physical, mental and moral power, a vast accumulation of knowledge, and its practical application to the affairs of daily life which places the necessities of life within the reach of all, and the luxuries and refinements to most. This to all, but to some it gives as a start and a precedence

the results of the superiority of their stock, and thus accentuates the natural inequality of man, and arouses in the breasts of the superficial a keen sense of injustice and a desire to renovate society and evolve a juster social order. The natural factors of the case are overlooked, and proposals subversive of the best interests of society are freely advocated. Impossible Utopias are constructed in which human nature is assumed divine, and the natural discontent of man is intensified and direction given to it. Reason may cry from the house-tops to these would-be reformers, and they will be deaf to her voice, as likewise will be their dupes. They will not recognise that not only is the struggle for existence a necessary one, but that to it is to be accredited the rapidity of human progress, and that its cessation would produce an apathy and indifference to the affairs of life which would be much worse than the struggle where men meet each other with their talents sharpened and their activities alert for the slightest advantage which they can obtain.

The reforms which would eliminate this struggle would arrest mental development, destroy self-reliance, and reduce men to the merest automatons. Surely no great desidera-

tums, especially as in their achievement every sentiment of honour and honesty would first require to be eliminated, and might, not right, prevail.

THE COMBINATIONS.

Each so-called element, each combination of elements, each re-combination of the compounds has a form of crystallization ; though its crystals differ in their sizes, and are likely to be modified by truncations of angles and apices, as well as by partial mergings into one another ; yet the type of structure as shown by cleavage is constant. Particular kinds of molecules generally have particular shapes into which they settle themselves as they aggregate. In brief, it may be unhesitatingly affirmed, as an outcome of physics and chemistry, that throughout all phenomena presented by dead matter the natures of the units necessitate certain traits in the aggregates.

Their truth is again exemplified by aggregates of living matter.

Given the structures and consequent instincts of the individuals as we find them, and the community they form will inevitably present certain traits ; and no community having such traits can be formed out of individuals having other structures and instincts.

HERBERT SPENCER.

THE COMBINATIONS.

NEARLY all writers assume a pre-social state, but while this may be a convenient figment for the basing of an argument as to what man's rights would be under such conditions, it is scarcely conceivable that such a state ever really existed, except in the imagination. Let us accept the Biblical or scientific explanation of our origin, and we will alike conclude that man was never the solitary being which this state would imply. At first, of course, his social instincts would be confined by a very narrow area, but yet both by duration and nature they would be different from mere animal association, and entitled to be considered social. The grouping of different families into a confederacy would be in the early ages of the world a natural consequence of the realisation of the fact that their united strength would present a more effective protection against the powerful "beasts of the field," and also the recognition by comparatively

weak companies of shepherds that their flocks and herds were not too secure unless they increased their numerical strength. This co-operation for protection against external foes could only exist by an agreement amongst the individuals associating to respect the rights of the members, so that from the very earliest time a few of the most fundamental principles of all government would be practised. The first and most important of these would be the granting of equal freedom to all members of the combination. This freedom would, of course, be different from the freedom possible in any assumed state of nature. In a state of nature man would be absolutely free ; not bound by any ties to recognise the effects of his conduct on others, and having in his own person an inalienable claim to all the produce of the earth that he was strong enough to possess himself of ; and as each would have equal rights, constant collisions and warfare would prevail. Men would have been Ishmaels with their hands against every man's, and every man's against theirs ; the only duty being to sustain their own existence at all costs, and against all creatures. When they associate, however, for mutual advantage, they can only do so by foregoing

some of their natural rights. I do not suppose that at first they met and made a definite contract as to what they should give up and what retain; this would be gradually agreed to as the necessities of the case arose, and more complex relationships ensued; but they certainly would have to agree to recognise their neighbour's rights as being equal to their own, and their own as being perfect freedom so far as it did not conflict with the rights of others. Very early, too, a central power would exist upon which would devolve the duty of seeing that the weaker members of the federation obtained their just rights, and laws would soon be enacted—laws in their legal sense, and with means of enforcing conformity to them, and punishing infringements. These laws restricting the natural when erratic tendencies of the members give greater definiteness to social laws by ensuring the operation of personal peculiarities being repressed, as the great bulk of the inhabitants of any given society may be depended on to conform generally to the legal enactments, even to the abandonment of undesirable traits.¹

¹ Another and scarcely less powerful restraining influence is that

Association being accompanied by the right to freedom, would also require the recognition of the inviolability of property. The articles so considered in early times might be inconsiderable, such as articles of adornment and weapons, but when men began to be tillers of the soil as well as keepers of flocks and herds it would become of greater importance. Having settled on a certain plot, if the right to continue in occupancy had been in any way arbitrary, so far as the society in possession of the district was concerned, cultivation would have been impossible, because what one sowed another might have reaped. Fixity of tenure may be assumed, therefore, as characterising this state with certain duties to the head of it for protection. The right also to labour in whatever manner might be congenial would be permitted, and necessarily there would be joined to the right protection in the enjoyment of the fruits thereof. This enjoyment might consist in an immediate consumption of the

which religion exercises, as in whatever form it is professed no race of men has ever been exempt from its control. To correctly understand the dogmas professed, and the amount of conformity to them, which is a more important consideration, is to be in possession of the key to the most hidden recesses of men's natures.

results, or in their preservation, or in their transfer to others; but in no matter what form the individual elected to use them, his right to do so, so long as not inimical to the general interests, would have to be held inviolate, and progress would be exactly proportional to the sacredness with which these absolute rights were observed. From these principles of what must be admitted simple justice has flowed all our progress; and had mankind, in general, not concurred in maintaining them, our bridges would not have been built, our canals would not have been excavated, our railroads would not have been laid, our steamboats would not have been built, our manufactories would not have been established, nor would our colleges have been endowed. On the other hand, their continuance gives such a precedence to those who have had the effective desire of accumulation developed as to give them the control of the essentials of existence, and establish that form of poverty which peculiarly distinguishes civilisation, and which makes life itself, to a large majority of mankind, depend upon the consent of a few. That this characteristic of civilisation is an n-

evitable consequence of the first and most indispensable condition of its permanency, a very slight review of the circumstances will demonstrate. The differentiations of employments, which would occur immediately after association, would follow from an intuitive perception of the fact that the exertion of an individual when confined to a special work would be more productive than if a turn was taken at all the occupations necessary to a social existence. As human wants, however, are not in one direction, this could only be taken advantage of by a mutual understanding to exchange the products in proportion to their values. Their values would necessarily at first be the time required to produce them, for, as all the various labours engaged in would be equally essential to the existence of the community, each would have to be paid in the quantity of goods desired, that could be produced in an equal time to those offered in exchange, or he would not confine himself to a single relatively unremunerative employment. The work each would engage in, when all was of equal importance, would depend upon immediate surroundings, but it would not be long before tastes

and aptitudes would make their appearance, and lead to modifications of the primal equality. Two occupied at the same work would be discovered to produce different quantities in the same time, so that the most expert would be able to command for a portion of his time as much as the other for his whole time, and thus he could either enjoy much leisure, or acquire a surplus of goods for future necessities. The introduction of a system of exchange other than the barter of the actual products of labour, would encourage labourers to occupy their time in the accumulation of reserves rather than in the enjoying of the leisure which their superiority entitled them to; and these reserves, as civilisation became more complex, would assume ever-increasing importance, but they would not alter the fact that in social life the natural tendency is for all labour to exchange on the basis of the production of the least effective worker at each employment—and every degree of superiority above this minimum receives its proportional return.

Not only does the exchange value of all employments tend to the minimum of the least productive, but it

also tends to equality in each. The mere statement of the first fact assures its acceptance, but the second is not so self-evident, and will require some illustration. There does not, at first sight, appear much equality or tendency to equality between the fee of a specialist in any profession, and the wages of an unskilled labourer; but this is owing to the factors of the problem being obscured by the complex conditions of modern life, so that an analysis of the causes of one man's labour exchanging for the products of the labours of a number becomes indispensable. In the first place then, we will find the labour commanding the least value is that which can be most readily engaged in. Thus the unskilled labourer requires no expensive training to qualify him for his task, he is self-supporting from a very early age, and his relative success, in comparison with those in his own sphere, is assured, for, as there are no heights to which he is likely to attain, so there are few depths to which he can descend. Now, if there are two unskilled employments rated at different values, we shall find the higher rated is unpleasant, and disagreeable or dangerous, and the increased premium just balances its undesira-

bility. Were it otherwise, more would compete for employment in it, and so reduce the wages to the normal standard. The skilled artisan is rated on a higher basis, because his labour requires a lengthened apprenticeship, and a more skilful treatment, and did it not hold out the prospect of future compensatory benefits, no one would go to the trouble and expense of acquiring the necessary skill, or consent to the lengthened dependence on the kindness of others which it entails. In the professional man's case the probationary period is still greater, the expense of education more, and the natural qualities, if success is to be obtained, must be of a much higher order, for it cannot be denied that the number of genuine successes in the higher callings are few in comparison to the entries, and those who are destined for the rank and file are in a much worse position than the tradesman. A fortune has been spent in their education and training, they are expected to maintain a very expensive position, and the returns for their services are not greater than, sometimes not equal to, those of the best in the cheaper rated employments. The importance of these considerations will be admitted, and when the

difficulty experienced in entering particular employments is recognised, the special qualities necessary for exceptional success taken into account, and the inherent agreeableness, unpleasantness or risk discounted, we shall arrive at the conclusion that the varying returns are in reality more nearly equal than what they are generally accounted.

¶ No argument will be required to convince you that, if the expenses of training for all businesses were identical, the same qualities necessary in all, and the chances of success equal in all, the rewards would be equal; and the equally cogent corollary is, when the differences indicated are allowed for, the rewards are in all cases practically equal. The third-rate professional man earns no more than, if as much as, the first-class artisan, and the extra emoluments of those who secure the leading positions in the profession are simply the returns for extra skill, and compensation for extra expenses, with perhaps a small percentage for the confidence in their own powers which induced them to enter upon a profession which numbered considerably more failures than successes amongst its members. This, it may be said, does not

take sufficient cognisance of the chances to which many apparently owe their success, rather than to any intrinsic merit ; but in an advanced civilisation it is impossible to deprive individuals of the accidental advantages of position and claims resting more on the merits of friends than on their own.

The man of no ability, however, no matter what his original opportunities may have been, will not for long remain ahead of the better qualified, and in a country where there is a constant blending of classes, the highest positions being alike open to all, and the performance of duty with fidelity and capacity being the sole requisite, he who possesses genuine qualifications will find a market for them. The discernment of the world is generally fairly correct, and progress is not due to a systematic selection of those least adapted for the places of power.

The units of any society, therefore, combine under certain definite and well understood legal laws, which restrict natural tendencies that would be inimical to the general welfare of the combination. These restrictions at first confine themselves exclusively to the most

palpably necessary conditions of the permanency of association, such as individual liberty, only limited by recognition of equal liberty in the other members; the inviolability of personal property, and, from an early date, the agreement to concede a right to continuation of occupancy in land. The units start equal, but, being placed in different situations, develop in unequal degrees; some, being careless and improvident, become dependent upon the more thrifty members of the community, and by necessity sell their birthright for the metaphorical mess of pottage. While, as a whole, the entire combination would be animated by a single purpose on questions concerning their rights in opposition to the rights of other combinations, there would be questions of internal policy upon which they would take the most diverse views. The community, in short, would be split up into separate parts, and the rights of the part to which the individual belonged, in contradistinction to the rights of other parts, would appear to him the most essential consideration. These class distinctions would distort judgment, and the apparent inequity of lots would foster discontent. The inexorable laws, owing to which

they exist, being little understood, attempts in the nature of them ineffectual would be made to minimise their seemingly harsh effects. So long as man remains essentially the creature he is, failure must follow all such efforts, as material affairs move in such a cycle that the reduction of pressure in one direction but increases it in another, and nothing really beneficial can be secured except by a revolution in the moral nature of man, for with his present distinctive traits no essentially different form of aggregation is possible. It is, indeed, in the moral improvement of men that we can alone look for regeneration, and if a time should dawn when all should realise that they were their brothers' keepers, the effect on life would be incalculable. No longer would they pursue their own careers in entire oblivion to the consequences upon others, but a new spirit, grander than anything conceived of by the loftiest chivalry, would prevail; the most austere features of life would be softened, and the time would probably not be far distant when "earth would reach its earthly best."

LABOUR.

I speak without prejudice, for I am still an honorary member of the Union, which, while working at my trade, I always supported. But, see : The methods by which a Trade Union can alone act, are necessarily destructive : its organisation is necessarily tyrannical. A strike, which is the only recourse by which a Trade Union can enforce its demands, is a destructive contest.

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These combinations, therefore, are necessarily destructive of the very things which workmen seek to gain through them—wealth and freedom.

HENRY GEORGE.

LABOUR.

LABOUR is the precursor and producer of all we call wealth, the accumulation and distribution of which is a condition of civilisation. Communities of men co-operating for protection by the necessarily limited area to which they would confine themselves, would not long be able to exist on the spontaneous offerings of Nature, but would have forced upon them the problem of increasing her gifts by judicious methods of cultivation, and for this purpose would quickly discover the importance of preparing suitable appliances for facilitating their labour. Naturally, therefore, a differentiation of employment would early take place, and its increasing minutiae would be suggested by every demand for increased production which would follow the growth in numbers of the community. As men became more cosmopolitan, an interchange of the products of different areas would ensue, and the means of transit would give rise to

another kind of labour, while the management of the internal and external commerce of the community would gradually devolve upon a certain class, who, while not actually producers, yet rendered such indispensable services to producers, as to fully compensate for the profit they made, and left the producers in reality safer than they would have been, had they attended to the duty of exchange themselves. In the early stages, all would receive only that which their services were valued at by the community, and each would be recognised as having an indubitable right to this. The same principle still prevails, but as population is in old countries very dense, the services of many could be dispensed with, but they have to be supported out of the joint-production of the community ; and as most of them consider it degrading to accept charity when they are willing and able to give labour for their maintenance, we have a keen competition for the productive employments, and a consequent willingness to undersell each others labour. This means simply that in a highly civilised country, labour by the aid of mechanism is rendered so effective, that there are great numbers whose services,

be they ever so efficient tradesmen, are practically valueless to the community, owing to the fact that the whole of the wants could be supplied with less workers, and the surplus merely diminishes the return of labour, either actively or passively; actively by competing so keenly amongst themselves for obtaining employment: passively by living on the voluntary or enforced charity of the other citizens. This competition, it may be urged, so reduces the cost of goods, as to bring them more within the reach of all classes, but this is only the case so long as an export trade is engaged in, for if the country was isolated, the reduced value would be of no consequence, as it would be of universal application, and the cheaper goods would be accompanied by the lessened value of labour and greatly restricted demand, which indeed it would indicate. It is in this way that the natural value of labour ceases to exist, and a point is reached where every increase of workers is disadvantageous, unless as in our own country, where they can be occupied in producing manufactured goods for the more recently settled countries. Were it not for this factor in the problem, the full effects of the Mal-

thusian doctrine would long since have been experienced by all the old countries, who, undoubtedly, by no system of husbandry, could sustain the increasing numbers which their favouring conditions have called into being.

The natural value of labour is, of course, the increased usefulness for human needs impressed on the material on which it is expended, but its limit is the effective demand, and where this does not exist, labour may be plentiful, but it is not valuable, and the point may be reached where in a particular direction it is valueless. In the early stages of society, and where there was no necessity for man to confine himself to one department of labour, but where it was possible for him to provide for all the wants of his life, with its Arcadian simplicity, labour could only become differentiated by an agreement, tacit or otherwise, to exchange results of labour, and the natural standard of exchange would be the time occupied in production. When specialisation, however, had continued for a length of time, and aptitudes for special tasks were discovered, and the different rates of efficiency of men at the same employments realised,

this would gradually change, and the standard of exchange would become the time occupied by the least effective worker, every degree of superiority receiving by the effect of its greater productiveness an enhanced value. This would enable the more expert to accumulate reserves where the desire of doing so existed, and after a time, those of less ability in their avocations would probably, through some misfortune, be obliged to apply to them for the use of a portion of these reserves, for which, naturally, they would be prepared to give some compensation. This compensation, with their higher efficiency, and possibly greater frugality, would soon place them in a position in which they could exist without the necessity of making any exertion, and as soon as the method of production under civilisation demanded the use of improved appliances, it is to them we would be indebted for the means of responding. This service they would only undertake if there was a sufficient likelihood of their being able to secure a favourable return for the risk and trouble; and the conditions would rapidly alter from every man being his own employer, to one undertaking to provide the machinery

necessary for the new requirements, take the risk of the work being satisfactory, and guarantee a certain rate of wages to those who worked for him, no matter how the venture terminated. The wages he could pay would be determined by the value to the community of the labour expended, and generally he would be able to pretty accurately forecast what this would be. In fact, in his ability to do so his success would largely depend; but no matter what miscalculations he might make, he, and not his workers, would have to bear the consequences. The great increase of production which would follow upon the adoption of mechanism driven by power, would reduce the value of the products, but so increase the quantity that a relatively high rate of wages would still be possible. Now, the differentiation of employments depending upon a tacit agreement to exchange products in their marketable ratios, it is apparent that every invention of labour-saving machinery everywhere benefits labourers by reducing the marketable values, and so placing a much larger supply within the reach of all. It is also clear that the greatly increased efficiency of labour by

machinery, with an increasing population, may lead to over-production, for this starts when the effective demand ceases, which it is quite as likely to do through production taking place on such a large and effective scale as to cause comparatively little employment for men, as through the absence of actual consumers. Up till this time the equity of conditions is admitted, but with its arrival labour troubles begin, and in the din of industrial warfare, all the harmony which used to exist between master and man is destroyed. Interested demagogues, incapable of understanding the factors of the problem, fan to fury the feelings of the men, by the sweat of whose brow these "lilies of the field, who toil not, neither do they spin," are supported. The conception of some irreconcilable enmity between capital and labour is instilled into their minds, which a fair consideration of the case will prove fallacious, and unnatural interference with the freedom of labour is resorted to, but they are vain and impotent of good results.

The first attempt, I believe, in England, at dealing with the labour problem, was a governmental one, and

was inspired by the decimation of the population which took place at the great plague. This rendered labour so scarce that it was considered that a legal restriction must be fixed to prevent capitalists being ruined by the exorbitant demand of the labourers. As might have been expected, its action was inoperative owing to the fact that when a man wanted work done, although a legal limit to what he might openly pay was fixed, he did not hesitate to make a present, if doing so accomplished his object, and a specially good man was always certain of getting his superiority compensated for by the same means. The futility of the act being thus demonstrated, it was repealed, to the general satisfaction, and since then until comparatively recent days, the private right of contract has been recognised in respect of labour as in other matters; but we seem again on the verge of most extensive governmental interference. Absolute freedom between labour and capital in an advanced state of civilisation is conceived by labourers to be unbearable; and long before the full effects of the inexorable struggle for survival is experienced, they combine amongst themselves to extort

more favourable terms from capital. In so far as these trades' organisations are concerned, they adopt the Malthusian doctrine, and by limiting the number permitted to enter the given trade, ensure, by reason of the lessened competition, the maintenance of a relatively high standard of wages. To this, those who are admitted to the trades can have no objection, but it presses hardly upon the equally deserving members of society, who are excluded and forced into other callings for which they may have less aptitude and less inclination. Many, indeed, are by these restrictive measures forced into the ranks of the unskilled labourers, although they may inherently be of very superior parts to those who become tradesmen, and the time may come when they will impinge upon the restrictive barrier with such force as to destroy it. The tactics of Trade Unions are such as must finally conduce to their overthrow; their rules being unelastic in regard to the merits of the workers, the tendency is to deteriorate all to the level of the least efficient that has secured admission to their ranks. This is a natural consequence of their rules fixing the minimum rate of wages for the trade which

necessitates the fixing of the standard day's work, and this cannot exceed the capacity of the most inferior workmen. A man having special facility in executing the work, is prohibited from its exercise, lest his neighbours should be *slaved*, that is, forced to try to equal him. The putting forth of his best powers, so far from bringing reward, would then subject him to contumely, so they are not called into play, the man degenerates, the incentive to excel is withdrawn, and all are reduced to a dead level of inferiority.

The important point to the tradesman is that he gains admission to the Union, for without this he will not, no matter how capable, be permitted to exercise his calling. This compels him to contribute a certain percentage of his wages weekly to sustain those drones, who, when trade is at all dull, cannot obtain employment anywhere; it also aids in supporting a staff of officials who find it much more remunerative to manage the Union than to follow their legitimate occupation. Occasionally these officials, to justify their existence, command a strike which all, no matter how reluctant, have to obey. For a few weeks the men receive about half

pay for walking about idle; the funds which should have been preserved for their maintenance in illness, or benefit to their families after death, being wasted, additional levies being called for when they return to employment after what their officials will be prepared to assure them is a substantial victory, but two of such victories in immediate succession would be destruction. The appearance of success attending strikes is entirely illusionary. There is no inherent enmity between capital and labour, though the rules of unions have contributed greatly to friction and done much to destroy the friendly feeling which we are assured did prevail before their formation. The rate that can be paid for work is determined by the effective demand for the products of that work, and when this for a time has been specially brisk, the competition for workers to increase the output left to its natural action would ensure high wages being paid exactly in proportion to the increased price which could be obtained for the goods, as every addition to the productive capacity would add to the profit. A reaction setting in owing to many preferring to do without the goods, or where

they are absolute necessities, with a decreased quantity, cheaper rates would necessarily ensue that orders might be secured, and these cheaper rates could only be conceded by reducing cost of production. No matter what price is obtained for any article, it must be more than the cost of production, or its manufacture will cease ; this is an absolute condition of production, as capital will not be risked unless there is this prospect of compensation.

A special part of the cost of production is wages, and any reduction in the value of goods must affect them, and the object of Trade Unions is to arrest this natural action. This can only be accomplished by a strike against the employers' proposals, and occasionally this appears to be crowned with success, and after work has ceased for a certain time, a compromise is arrived at or the proposal altogether abandoned.

A great triumph is declared to have been achieved, and the usefulness of unions and their necessity to counteract the power of capital is considered as established. The real fact, however, is that the cessation of work having reduced the stock of goods in the market, a renewed

demand at better prices springs up, and just in proportion to the duration of the strike can the manufacturer afford to forego the reduction that was proposed. He then appears by abandoning his first position to have originally been making an excessive claim, but in reality it is always immaterial to him what he pays so long as he knows, when entering on his engagements, what will be expected of him. It is this want of security in rates which really harasses him and embarrasses his movements, and makes him on all occasions oppose the actions of the unions. The minimum of profits on capital in ordinary business has long since been reached, and where excessive profits are realised it is owing to monopolies, or special knowledge, or perhaps the business being of a character which requires such immense capital as makes its undertaking so prohibitive as to establish a sort of monopoly.

There is yet another factor in the question of wages in the closed trades or professions. It will be at once apparent that there cannot be such a thing as an all round increase of wages. These can only be increased in relation to each other, as a universal increase would be

destructive of advantage to anyone, and, in fact, in the nature of things is impracticable. The cost of all products depending, as we have seen, most largely on wages, their increase means increased market prices, which, if there are only two or three trades affected, ensure the labour of its members exchanging for the labour of other members in a higher ratio ; but if the advance is participated in all round it is clear that an all round increase in market prices follows, and the ratios of exchange would be unaffected. Increase of wages therefore is a relative term, and can only be experienced by a few trades at the expense of the remainder of society to a greater extent than the increase, because the additional capital would carry greater interest and so far injuriously affect other trades in more than its apparent advantages to the employees.

The recent attempt to federate all trades into one inclusive combination is deserving of the highest commendation, in so far as the actuating motive is concerned, and it also indicates an awakening on the part of the unions to the fact that the advantages which individual trades gain by organisation is at the expense of

their fellow-workers. The idea of federating all trades is an attempt at conserving their own interests without other trades suffering; but if the advocates of the plan gave it their full consideration, they would see that while by combination they may raise the nominal rates of wages to anything they please that its members may work for, yet as it will apply to all trades, the market price of all products would be proportionately enhanced, and so the only advantage would be in dealing with larger sums of money.

The greatest difficulty in the labour problem is the numbers of willing workers who are from time to time unable to find employment, and many have been the suggestions for remedying this state of things. There can be no doubt that there is nothing more melancholy in the whole of civilised life than the appearance of men who can find no work to do, but it is difficult to see how this can be remedied. In our country the first principle recognised by Government is that all the inhabitants shall be fed and clothed, and to accomplish this end the right is reserved of forcing the more fortunate to contribute to their less fortunate brethren's support. Of course there

are many whose spirits recoil from the idea of living on charity enforced or otherwise, and for their especial benefit it is urged that the Government should undertake manufacturing work, and so guarantee employment. Those who advocate this plan reply to the objection of Government competing with private enterprise that they might pay less than the customary wages of the trade, so that men would only come to them under the stress of circumstances. This might be less charity in appearance, but would not be so in reality, as such works could only be continued by abstracting from the pockets of the other members of the community the requisite financial assistance to keep them going; they would constantly be taken advantage of by the poorest class of workmen whom a private employer would not keep, and as the only reason why a given trade declines is because of lessened demand for its products, there never being any insufficiency of capital if a profit is to be made, it is clear Government could not create a demand unless by placing the articles on the market at a price which would destroy the business of those who still continued in it. The only work which Government can properly undertake would

be improvement of roads, harbours, or the constructing of the appliances for national defence where they would not be competing with private enterprise, and these they can only undertake by raising the necessary funds amongst the members of the community.¹

Within the last few years a demand has gone forth for legalising the number of working hours, and probably we shall ere long have a Government in power with a mandate from the people to enact an eight hours day. Such, it is argued, would, by reducing the individual production, increase the numbers required to supply the existing demand, and so remove a great number of the unemployed from our midst; while quite recently the paradox has been started that it would not decrease production, as quite as much work would be done in eight hours as in nine hours. If it decreased production, wages would have to be decreased in proportion if the demand was to continue, and if it did not decrease production it would not afford additional employment, which is a principal argument for its adoption. The

¹ If undertaken on a large scale in a limited time, these would so increase the burden of taxation as to cause great and general hardship.

natural tendency would be a decreased quantity of work, and in the absence of some mechanical improvements, the price of goods on the market would inevitably advance, and probably a restricted demand follow. If it did not do so, and wages remained intact, as it is the producers who are the largest consumers, they would have to pay a greater price for their requirements, which would mean an actual loss. The recent experiment of Messrs. Mather & Platt with the eight hours day has greatly strengthened the position of those who advocate it, but in reality it is little to the point. The experiment was admittedly undertaken as a test with the co-operation of the Trades Societies, and it is not difficult to understand that the men would one and all be animated with the desire of bringing it to a successful issue. There would also be active in this case the feelings of gratitude to the employers who were sufficiently spirited to make the test in face of their other competitors adhering to the old rules, and if under such circumstances good results were not obtained, they never would be. The whole case would be different, however, in an enforced experiment, and where competition was against con-

tinental nations who already work much longer hours at less money.

Reduced working hours means reduced wages or increased prices of goods, which would have identical effects so far as home trade is concerned, but would tend to restrict foreign trade; and if in their desire to obviate this natural result an act was passed making it illegal to increase price of goods or reduce wages, it would be impossible to compel capitalists to continue in the business and incur all the attendant risks, and hence trade would leave our shores and settle where a more practical, if less benevolently inclined, Government prevailed. Legislative interference with the private concerns of the people can be productive of no advantages, and when pushed to its logical limits is sure to result disastrously, no matter how well intended.

Trades Unionism therefore appears to be but an abortion of economics, powerless to improve the position of any trade except at the expense of the rest of the community, and absolutely valueless if generally adopted. As at present advocated, it is destructive of the best interests of the rising generation, repressing much

talent that would be highly advantageous to the community if allowed to find its proper level. It diminishes the income of the members, and elects some to positions which can only be retained by the manufacture of grievances, in which, indeed, they show fair facility. Chimeras are created and discussed by the councils, and in an elective Government like our own the necessity of public men to conform to the opinion of these organisations leads to some wonderfully illogical schemes being publicly advocated. In fact so little independent thought is there on the subjects, that the resolution of a Trades Society is taken as fixing for all time the fundamental rules. This may be a proof of power and influence which its members may well be proud of; but the fanciful grievances, and absurd resolutions which are carried out in their names are powerless to affect permanently the natural laws upon which alone intercourse can continue.

CAPITAL.

This is a free country. The labourer's son may become President ; poor boys of to-day will be millionaires thirty or forty years from now, and millionaires' grandchildren will probably be poor. What more can be asked ? If a man has energy, industry, prudence and foresight, he may win his way to great wealth. If he has not the ability to do this he must not complain of those who have.

HENRY GEORGE--*Social Problems.*

CAPITAL.

Capital does not supply or advance wages, as is erroneously taught. Capital does not maintain labourers during the progress of their work, as is erroneously taught. Capital therefore does not limit industry, as is erroneously taught.

HENRY GEORGE.

No more positive statements of what capital does not do is possible, and if they truly represent the case, the influence which capitalists have exercised, and exercise in the business of the world, is without any just foundation, and should most certainly not be tolerated. If the vast industrial undertakings which characterise our time can be accomplished without capital; if labourers are not maintained by it during the progress of their work, and do not even require advances from it, the capitalists must be sorcerers to secure the acquiescence of Society to the positions they occupy.

If capital performs none of these services which have been considered its special functions, it is surprising that

so many have been always content to be its servants, seeing that they would be so much freer by becoming their own masters ; and capital not being requisite, no barriers would exist. Practical men know the fallacy of these negative assertions, and if you ask a man why he does not embark in business for himself, his reply will be having no money. When carrying on business on a certain scale, and you suggest an extension, the reply is probably still want of capital, giving in these few words a most conclusive indication of the limiting effect on industry which the want of it occasions.

There is, however, enough truth, not in the statements, but in the ingenious and specious arguments by which they are supported to supply the propagandist of Socialism with popular if unfounded declamations against the existing social organisation. Capitalists are considered modern "lilies of the field, who toil not, neither do they spin," and yet they are arrayed in costly apparel and live in the greatest luxury, while the poor drudges who really produce all the wealth are content with fustian and the plainest fare. This, they say, is due to the erroneous teaching of political economy which, since its first

scientific analysis of society, has declared that capital has been advancing to labour the means of subsistence, which is a most palpable fallacy; the fact being that it is labour which advances to capital the results of its exertions for a week or a month ere it receives any returns. Take, say they, the stock of a manufacturer at the beginning of a week, when, say, he has £1,000 in the bank and £10,000 stock, and take his stock again at the end of the week after he has paid £250 in wages, and is he poorer or richer? Is it not a fact that notwithstanding his outlay he is really richer, for the £250 he has paid has added an increased value of £280 or £300 at least to his stock. This all looks very well, and may sometimes be correct, but sometimes it may be quite the reverse. Accidents may happen during the week which will destroy the profits that should have accrued, failures may occur, a fire may take place which will sweep away occasionally the net results of a life's toil, or an anarchist in the now fashionable recreation of his class may throw a bomb into it, destroying the work partially or entirely. In the event of any such unlooked-for incidents, how about his position at the end of the

week? Will the workman return the wages which he received, and for which no return has been obtained by the capitalist? Verbally, of course, the contention is correct, but it must be apparent to the meanest understanding that the reason of the capitalist not pre-paying for the work to be performed by his men is the uncertainty that would in that case prevail of it being done at all. The labourer knows the capitalist cannot abscond, and that his wages will be a first charge on his estate, no matter what misfortunes may overtake him, and so he can perform his task with confidence in his wages being forthcoming; but no such security would be possible for the capitalist did he advance the wages. Besides which, it must surely be admitted that the operations on which capital is employed are of such magnitude that the value added by labour is unrealisable for weeks, or may be months, after the labour has been expended on it, during the whole of which time it is subjected to all risks—fire, accidents, water, the act of God, and the Queen's enemies, as the Bills of Lading phrase it, and if overtaken by any of these no reparation is possible. It will be seen, therefore, that in works of consequence at least capital is

necessary and indispensable in fact, and this particularly for the maintenance of labourers during not only the increasing of the value of material by labour, but up till it receives a marketable form. Not only this, but the subdivision of labour is now so great that a single capitalist rarely undertakes all the processes necessary for producing a finished article from the raw material, but only deals with it in one or two operations, and then passes it on to the next specialist in the ascending scale.

Now it is evident that those engaged in the operations approaching the final form of the material, have to find not only the capital to pay their own workers while engaged in their part of the production, but they have also to repay the wages of the whole army of workers that have been employed at it in all the preceding stages, and his ability to do so is the *sine qua non* of his continuance and success in the business, so that the extent of his operations is distinctly dependent upon his resources in the matter of capital. For instance, the linen manufacturer buying flax, pays a proportion of the wages of the machinist who made the plough and other implements; he pays for the seed and the sow-

ing, the cost of transit, etc., and all this with a profit before he can put his own work on it. In purchasing the raw material necessary for the constructing of engines and machines, the engineer pays the wages of the miners, the smelters and the refiners, the cost of rolling or forging it into the required form, and the whole host of incidental expenses involved in its extraction from the bowels of the earth, its preparation and its conveyance to the place where he is going to expend his labour,—rather a large undertaking, and certainly impossible of performance without the aid of capital. Similar series of consequential expenditure of capital might be given in all of what are called productive trades; and in those intermediate trades that devote themselves to the facilitating of exchange, and which may be said to act as a sort of flywheel, absorbing within themselves the produce of the others, and giving it out gradually and uniformly as required. In the absence of capital, these accumulations of productions could not exist, and production under the conditions of civilised life would be impossible. This does not limit industry to the extent of saying that labour cannot be exerted

without previous accumulations, which is Mr. Henry George's conception of the proposition that the maintenance of labour is drawn from capital. All that it means is that where these accumulations are not present, labour is necessarily of the crudest and least specialised character, possessing a very low rate of efficiency, and barely sufficing to maintain life—certainly incompatible with the creation of a surplus, and inimical to material progress, which entirely depends upon the increased efficacy of labour which is secured by reserves. The whole of Mr. George's misrepresentation or misconception of the functions and importance of capital originates in his assumption that "Society in its most highly developed form is but an elaboration of society in its rudest beginnings, and that principles obvious in the simplest relations of men are merely disguised and not abrogated or reversed by the more intricate relations that result from the division of labour and the use of complex tools and methods." It is not in any way remarkable that such a conception of the permanency in action of principles in all stages of society should give birth to novel doctrines. It is one thing to assert that

the governing principles are identical in all positions, but quite another that their application is unchanging. While there can be no dispute about the first assertion, it is undeniable that the second—the application—is entirely a question of the relationship existing amongst the social units, and does not exist prior to association. In the simplest as in the most complex relations of men the principle of justice is necessary to be recognised, but the requirements of justice are not the same in both cases. Justice, which is the most essential requisite of society, is society's own creation, and is modified by every exigency in the progress of society. It consists primarily in the preserving of the general welfare of the community, and secondarily in the preserving of the best interests of each individual, allowing to each the fullest liberty consistent with these essentials. Consequently, in its rudest beginnings, the ability to defend the selected district from the incursions of equally rude and less settled communities is the test of permanency and the measure of security, and the compelling of each to be trained for conflict is expedient and is just; but in its later developments, and when dangers of this

character are of less frequent occurrence, and the necessity of providing for the animal wants of the community become a most important and exacting task, it is more expedient, and therefore more just, to arrange for the defence to be undertaken by a part, and so leave the other free to follow particular social and productive avocations. As in all stages it is necessary to provide for protection, so it is just when a certain portion is relieved from the necessity of attending to this duty, to compel them to contribute to it monetarily, whatever may be their opinion as to the propriety of warfare in general, or the advisability of any particular engagement. It would be unjust to the rest of the community to allow the personal opinions of this part to be urged as a reason for exclusion from taxation, or to endanger the general safety in deference to their whims. It is, in all cases, just to compel men to conform to the laws of the society of which they are members, no matter what their attitudes in regard to the constructing of them may have been;—the wisdom of the majority having decided that they are the most conducive to the general welfare, no dissentients can be tolerated, as such

would be destructive of the safety and the convenience of the greatest part which must receive the first consideration. In civilised society very many conditions may exist which have been of very gradual growth, and provided to meet exigencies which have arisen in the life of society, which exigencies may have long since passed away, but the conditions they gave birth to continue, and to remove them might be more destructive of the true interests of society than the acquiescence which is extended to them by society in general. In this way we may find in the present application of principles little similarity to the just considerations which first decided their form; but an abrupt alteration to make them more in conformity with present ideas, be they ever so correct in the abstract, would probably loosen the cohesion of society by undermining the fundamental principles upon which it depends for continuance.

In the earliest stages of society men must work that they may eat; in the most advanced the same essential qualification is requisite. This is an example of identity of principles, but under what vastly different conditions.

In the first he probably builds his own house, makes his own wearing apparel, tills his own bit of ground, snares his own game, and feeds his own flocks and herds, and makes his own implements; all within his own family. In the advanced stages his operations are of a highly specialised character, he confining himself to a single occupation, or, where society is very highly developed, often only a single part of one occupation, in which he attains wonderful facility, and with the aid of the other units, who perform the different portions of the work, an amount of efficiency in production is attained which is marvellous. It is indeed this specialising of work which makes production in an advanced civilisation depend on the amount of surplus available by which alone the differentiated units can be supported while their tasks are being accomplished and an exchange of the results effected. For in the exchange value of the results of their labour, more than on the labour exerted, does the value of their work depend, and where efficiency is very high it will induce a decreased exchange value, but if the goods are absolute necessities it will place a greater supply within the reach of all. It is

this which leads to overproduction, for the point is soon reached where the increased goods are not required to satisfy an effective demand, and workers could then only be kept producing by decreasing wages or organising a gigantic scheme of charity which would have for its object the satisfying of every demand of man, let him make to the community a corresponding return in services or not. The demands of the units of society are great enough to absorb all possible production, but so long as numbers are unwilling or unable to produce goods of exchangeable value, so long must we have sin, misery, and strife—the natural offspring of sloth and indulgence. There is therefore no parity between an early and an advanced society. Viewed from a certain standpoint, which is largely sentimental, the former appears to possess many and incalculable advantages. We have absolute freedom, no feeling of dependence upon others, and a wild healthy life which would seem to make existence real, in comparison with the effete condition of civilised society. The former is certainly more conducive to animal enjoyment, and in leaving it behind them men leave for ever much of their most

animal properties, but under civilisation they obtain compensating advantages. They have greater security with lessened personal dangers and risks; they have the pleasures of intercourse with their kind, and intercommunication with other countries; they have increased means of obtaining knowledge and absolute assurance against starvation, which the accumulated reserves is a guarantee of, and they usually are able to cope with diseases or disasters in a more effectual way. The fact, however, that there is a constant endeavour on the part of mankind to develop into the higher life is a proof of their belief in the advantages which it offers.

The want of capital must therefore be distinctly admitted to form a limit to industry in civilised society, and yet in reality in practice it rarely happens that it does so now-a-days. The present material wealth of the world is so great that there is at all times more than enough capital ready for the exploiting of any undertaking which can show a reasonable prospect of success. In fact so anxiously are investments for capital sought for that a very critical investigation into all the facts is rarely held, and we see money subscribed freely

in the furtherance of schemes which require the most Micawber-like spirit to see the probability of success. The first essential is security under the laws, and certainty of action in the laws. Mr. George very forcibly describes the influence the want of this element exercises in restricting trades, and cites the cases of Mexico and Tunis, where insecurity of property prevents the accumulation necessary for developing their resources, and deters the influx of capital from foreign nations which the natural prospects would ensure. The same facts have operated in all Oriental countries to the restriction of their progress, notwithstanding that natural fertility and favouring circumstances, combined with the aptitude of the races, would with security suffice to make them the most wealthy and enlightened in the world. The possession of capital in them is not a protection but a danger, and its concealment often essential to the preservation of life; hence every incentive to exertion more than what is absolutely indispensable is withdrawn, and they remain stationary. Similar results would undoubtedly follow in our own country should the protection of law ever be withdrawn from property and an attempt at communising it be made.

In semi-civilised countries, therefore, it is the want of security which limits industry, but in highly advanced states of civilisation it is the want of effective demand which operates. That there is a possible demand for the labours of all humanity, aided by the most perfect machinery that ingenuity can devise, is nothing to the point. Our desires will give no stimulus to industry unless when accompanied by the power of giving exchangeable value for what we desire, when they become effective and creative of industry. In old countries, with a congested population and highly improved machinery, the power of labour is great, and the production of all commodities is on such a comprehensive scale, that all requirements are at very low rates; but the very improvement which accounts for these low rates reduces the number requisite to produce the goods, and of necessity leaves many unable to earn money for purchasing even at the low rates current. This inexorable effect of improved methods would be felt more keenly and earlier were it not that there are, even in civilised countries, always some undertakings to be carried out, which will, it is considered, give such greater efficiency to labour, or to

the transit of the results of labour, as will justify the expenditure, and ensure a return on the capital requisite to carry them out. Of such a nature are canals, railways, bridges, and even the superior tools and appliances which are constantly being designed for accelerating production. Were it not for these and for the outlets of capital which new countries afford, the limits of industry would long since have been reached, as, notwithstanding what any theorist may assert, not only is capital necessary for carrying out production in modern society, but of equal, if not of greater, importance is the existence of a suitable object upon which it can be advantageously employed. It is the increasing difficulty of finding such that causes hardship in the midst of plenty, and as capitalists are not professional philanthropists they do not feel called on to invest when there is no prospect of a return for the risk and the trouble, and who will say they should?

The functions of capital, and the power which it confers upon its possessor, are but little correctly understood. Every mountebank economist has got a theory of his own, which he propounds to the multitude who are easily collected to hear his shallow vapourings; but the acme

of verbal jugglery consists in asserting that labour exists independent of capital, and that labourers are in reality made its slaves without receiving any services from it whatever. The fact that the labourer does put an enhanced value on the material does not establish this conclusion, owing to his labour not being in a consumable form, and, did the capitalist not advance him the value of his labour, he would most frequently starve before it was in a marketable form. There are a few minor trades where this proposition may not be necessarily true, but, speaking of the business of the world as a whole, we are right in asserting that were it not for the prudential considerations which led to the accumulation of capital, its performance would be impossible, or if possible, only so with great hardship. This capital is being constantly consumed, and constantly replaced, with a slight addition called profit to repay the owners for risking its possession, by venturing to employ it in the furtherance of the particular trade it is applied to.

No abnormal profits are made on capital, and, as in the case of wages, the profits of all businesses tend to minimum, and to uniformity. If it were otherwise, and

some special trade, easy of access and for little risk, offered exceptional advantages, a great influx of capital to that trade would immediately ensue, and the consequent competition would restore uniformity. Now, as capital is destined for the payment of labourers, it follows that their united wages will be theoretically proportional to the capital available, and the rate of wages have a ratio to the number of labourers seeking employment. As to the first, as capital is now practically unlimited, there is no restrictive barrier so far as it is concerned ; but population being an ever increasing factor in a social state, while the possible employment of labour is an ever narrowing one, an undue competition for employment is almost certain to follow, with a constant tendency for wages to fall below the natural minimum, and reach the lowest point consistent with existence and the performance of social duties. This tendency of population to exceed the means of subsistence is called the Malthusian doctrine, and although its full effect has never yet been experienced in our country, there is no doubt its truth is yearly becoming more apparent. The strongest arguments in favour of the doctrine have been little

felt by us, owing to our being, but to a limited extent, an agricultural people. This is the law of the diminishing return of labour, which simply asserts the fact that, as population does increase, and the earth is called on to yield its fruits in greater abundance, it is less able to do so owing to the virgin properties of the soil being exhausted, and, therefore, a double amount of labour does not mean a double produce, but a decreasing ratio to the exertion. If improved methods of cultivation have been adopted for a length of time, the results obtainable from additional labour are inconsiderable, and only by further improvements in agricultural practice, and the introduction of labour-saving appliances, can this tendency to a diminishing return be minimised, and that only to a given extent.

Now, as the land of any country and of the entire world is a finite quantity, it is not difficult to see that this points inevitably to a time when the earth would no longer be able to sustain its ever-increasing millions, if there were no restrictions to their multiplying power, and it is the approach of this time which makes the struggle for existence so keen at present, and in itself

presents a natural barrier to the tendency of over-population. Were it not for the great improvements in manufacturing industries which the last two centuries have witnessed, the limits of industry would long ere this have been reached. These improvements, by practically annihilating distances and placing at our doors the necessaries of life which have been raised thousands of miles away, at prices lower than they could be grown in our thickly populated land, have for a time postponed, but are powerless to permanently remove, the consequence of this inexorable law; a law which, like a harsh and cruel destiny, condemns millions of our race to the worst forms of slavery, the greatest penury, the deepest degradation, and the elimination of every noble and generous sentiment which nature may have implanted in their breasts. No wonder this spectacle has inspired the best, the truest, the most intellectual of mankind, to devote their lives and fortunes to the attempt to find a way out of the wilderness of poverty, sin and suffering by which humanity is surrounded. No wonder visionary schemes have been propounded, but none too visionary to obtain earnest and enthusiastic adherents, who, with

the fidelity of ancient crusaders, have consecrated life and fortune to the establishment of a juster social order. We must respect every noble thought and every generous deed, even though we are convinced of the impossible nature of the tasks they seek to accomplish, and by demonstrating this may perhaps secure the dedication of the talent to more feasible tasks than the quixotic one in which it is engaged.

The statement that other things being equal, the capital invested in all businesses brings the same return, may seem a paradox and inconsistent with fact. Let a comparison, however, be made of the agreeableness or disagreeableness of particular methods of investment, their comparative risk or safety, their magnitudes which may sometimes give almost monopoly rates to those engaged in them, and all the other factors, and its substantial truth will be admitted. Were it otherwise, as I have already said, and any trade with little training and trouble gave exceptional returns, such an influx of capital to it would occur as would soon induce the normal level. The fact that immense fortunes are made in trading, is not inconsistent with it, the explanation

being that money makes money, and that a very small percentage of profit on the capital required to conduct the businesses in which men become millionaires, means great annual increments. Couple with this the salary earned for the special knowledge required to conduct these businesses, and the occasional fortunate anticipation of market movements, and we surely have a sufficient explanation of the phenomenal wealth acquired, without any undue profit from labour. As a proof of this, the firms who amass the greatest wealth in the shortest time, are not by any means those who are least generous to their men, and, whoever heard of a bankrupt firm who could attribute their reverses to excessive liberality to their employees? It is no advantage to a manufacturer to pay a small rate of wages, rather the reverse, as he as a rule only receives for the finished article the cost of production, plus a small percentage for the risk of his capital—called interest. Therefore it follows that so long as a demand is existing, the higher the rate of wages, the greater the cost of production, and the greater the amount of interest. The only reason for reducing wages is to induce a demand where such

is non-existent or deficient in volume, and if workmen cease production altogether for a time, it may serve the same purpose in a different way—by reducing the quantity of manufactured goods, and so securing a demand for a further supply which may obviate the necessity for reducing wages. The only reason why the capitalist at a given time is opposed to advancing wages, is that before such is demanded he is committed to contracts based on the existing cost of production, and every increment means a loss to him of a portion of the profit he was rightfully entitled to have on the undertaking; and when wages have advanced to a certain point he is unable to get work to keep going until actual want of employment brings a reaction in wages, and a fresh demand is created at the reduced standard of production. This return of work evokes a fresh application for additional remuneration, so that he is again mulcted of the prospective advantages of his contracts, and they must be completed regardless of cost. This cycle of events has occurred with such regularity, that no doubt the action of workmen is anticipated in making new engagements; but it

would greatly simplify matters, and contribute to harmony between employers and employees, if the standard of wages was fixed absolutely for definite periods—say a year—so that an exact knowledge of the extent to which they might without speculation commit themselves, would always be in the possession of manufacturers. This would give confidence in making contracts for forward dates, as approaching the time of revision of wages, the tendency of demand would enable a certain forecast of the probable rate which would be arranged, and so minimise risk and remove the appearance of conflicting interests. In reality, capital and labour do not conflict in interests; they are subject to identical influences, and the law which compels the labourers to compete amongst each other for work, compels the capitalists to compete amongst each other for the sale of the produce of that work. In each case the minimum point is reached, and the consumers—the vast majority of which are workers—reap in the result of the competition between employers compensatory advantages to what they lost in the competition amongst their fellows. This, so long as the

normal operation of events is not subject to unnatural interference which secures undue advantages to certain sections of workers. Capitalists are therefore seen to be as powerless to evade the effects of competition as labourers, and no matter what their personal desires may be, they are forced under all ordinary circumstances to pay no more than the current rate, and they will not be able to secure the services of men at less. The question resolves itself into one of expediency, and anything that a particularly benevolent employer might feel disposed to give beyond the rate fixed by the competition of labourers, or the standard adopted by the Union in trades subject to its influence, would be much better given as charity, because, being so allocated without disguise, no return upon it would be looked for, and the chance of securing business would not therefore be imperilled.

EQUALITY.

You can't keep a dead level long if you burn everything down flat to make it. Why, bless your soul, if all the cities of the world were reduced to ashes, you'd have a new set of millionaires in a couple of years or so out of the trade in potash. In the meantime what is the use of setting the man with the silver watch against the man with the gold watch, and the man without any watch against them both?

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Were the world composed of Saint Bernards or Saint Dominics it would be equally odious, and at the end of a few score years would cease to exist altogether. Would you have every man with his head shaved and every woman in a cloister carrying out to the full the ascetic principle? Would you have conventicle hymns twanging from every lane in every city in the world? Would you have all the birds in the forest sing one note and fly with one feather? You call me sceptic because I acknowledge what is; and in acknowledging that, be it linnet or lark or priest or parson, be it, I mean, any single one of the infinite varieties of the creatures of God, I say that the study and acknowledgment of that variety amongst men especially increases our respect and wonder for the Creator, Commander, and Ordainer of all these minds, so different and yet so united—meeting in a common adoration and offering up, each according to his degree and means of approaching the Divine centre, his acknowledgment of praise and worship, each singing his natural song.

WM. THACKERAY—*History of Pendennis*.

EQUALITY.

LIBERTY, fraternity, égalité are the shibboleths of popular democracy, and are supposed to express the three essentials of happy and contented existence. Liberty is a relative term, its interpretation depending upon the progress which men have made in the arts of civilisation, and where this is considerable, the unrestrained freedom of barbarism would not be liberty, but license. In a state of refinement true liberty consists quite as much in respecting the rights of others as in asserting our own, and a general undue preponderance of the latter practice would be destructive of society, and altogether incompatible with the continued belief in the brotherhood of man, which is a conception of advanced ethical attainments popularised by the democratic orator. That all three, when viewed from a given standpoint, express incontrovertible truths must be admitted, but when the standpoint required to be assumed is inconsistent either with the

present position of man, or inaccurate in regard to many important aspects of his life, their practical value is sensibly diminished. All are entitled to the fullest liberty that the well-being of the other units of society will permit, and if all had attained the moral elevation necessary for the acceptance in its entirety of the doctrine of fraternity, with all its corresponding duties and responsibilities, it might conceivably be advantageous, but more probably would be destructive of all enterprise. We need not, however, investigate what the consequence would be, because its adoption would mean such a revolution of human nature as we are not justified in anticipating this side of the bourn.

Religion and science are at one in asserting that all men are of one flesh and blood, but so, too, in the opinion of the most profound scientists, is the rest of the animal creation; but it does not therefore follow that they are all equal. Shylock, in declaring the equality of Jews and Christians, asks, "Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled

by the same winter and summer?" If these constitute equality, then not only all humanity, but the higher types of the animal creation, are equal both in these and in all their ultimate relations to the physical laws of the universe. It would, however, be a far too hasty generalisation to assume that because in these very important essentials they are equal, they must or can be equal throughout; in fact such an assumption carries with it its own refutation. We know that whatever may have been the capacity for equality "at the beginning," no two human beings ever have been, nor in the decrees of nature ever can be, circumstanced exactly alike, so that infinite variety is ensured not only in physical, but in mental and moral capabilities of men, and each is of necessity a distinct personality. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the fact, which is as true in regard to the peer as the peasant, that the positions we to-day occupy in the world have been determined by the forces to which we owe our being and the limitations by which we have been surrounded, and we have had just as much control over these as a puppet has over the showman. None of us have

had the opportunity of exercising any selection either as to the country in which we should be born or the position we should occupy in life. Had we been consulted in the matter, and by some superhuman means a knowledge of the different conditions conveyed to us, it is not likely our careers would have been the same ; but so long as effect follows cause, so long must we be content to accept our lot, however arbitrary and unjust it may at first sight appear. It must, too, be admitted that it does at first sight appear both arbitrary and unjust that a large portion of humanity should be doomed, through no fault of their own, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, while a small percentage without exertion or apparently any moral, mental or physical superiority should be fortune's favourites and possess all the luxuries and conveniences which that fickle dame can confer. No wonder this aspect of the question, when fixed upon by those modern dreamers of dreams and seers of visions to the exclusion of the other factors in the problem of life, gives them an exaggerated and distorted view of the lots of humanity, and leads them to emulate the wisdom of the grumbling

clown, who conceived that there was something wrong which he could set right.

A partial view of human life does not enable us to see any harmony or equity therein, and seems to induce the belief that mortal man is more just than God, or else such suffering as everywhere abounds would never be permitted to continue in the universe. The actions of modern reformers seem to imply a conviction that if they had been taken behind the scenes and consulted about the creation they could have given some hints which would have ensured a juster and nobler social order, for there is scarcely any existing institution which they do not find fault with; and as all institutions are the necessary evolutions of the laws which were ordained to rule and govern the world, it follows that the imperfections now discovered are directly due to primary arrangements being wrong. We would never know half the reasons there are for discontent with life had we not a few demagogues to make them a special study, and as each is able to suggest some improvement on the original design, it is evident that from their point of view at any rate it was far from perfect. One remedy

for the existing inequality is to level all ranks and to communise all property; for Jack being as good as his master, must become his equal in station and in fortune. The distinction between mine and thine which since the dawn of civilisation up till the present has been as a principle held inviolate, is to be ruthlessly swept away, and the nineteenth century is to see the revival of the "good old rule, the simple plan, that they shall take who have the power and they shall keep who can." By this means all traces of poverty, with its concomitant misery, will be removed from the world, and as by a stroke of some mighty magician's wand, all external inequalities will be abolished. Were it possible to give effect to these day-dreams and establish this much-lauded Utopia, the succeeding few months would exceed in criminality, suffering and vice all the previous records of humanity; a power would be placed in the hands of those unaccustomed to its use; the greatest abuses would prevail, and earth, so far from becoming the promised paradise, would be a pandemonium. The equality which would result from establishing a sameness in externals would of necessity be of short duration; the natural

powers of men would reassert themselves, and, as progression and development go on unceasingly, men would quickly find their levels again, and in a couple of years or so the fittest would be carried to the surface and become supreme.

If we lived in India or some other Oriental country where the accident of birth fixed for all time our position and avocation in life, where the rigid distinctions of caste divided the various classes from each other, and precluded the possibility of advancement in life no matter what the ability, we could see a substantial reason for discontent, and could understand and sympathise with an agitation for the removal of this "birth's invidious bar." Living, however, as we do, in a country where the most absolute freedom consistent with the rights of others is our birthright, where every calling and employment, so far as our laws and customs are concerned, is open to all citizens, and the only qualification really essential to success is ability, discontent with our social system is inexplicable and really means the jealousy which small minds experience at the success of the more deserving. Under existing conditions, the highest offices

in the country are open to the humblest born, and that they are not more frequently occupied by such is due not to any social barrier but to their relative capacity. It is idle to grumble because another is born under conditions more favourable to rapid advancement; the State cannot regulate such, nor can its legislation affect many of the other factors of life which are the most fruitful sources of complaining. Pope has said men would be angels, angels would be gods, and certainly the philanthropy which modern reformers teach seems based upon angelic principles, and may be realised when the people are as a whole translated into an angelic sphere.

It may be fairly asked what real reason for discontent exists at the present time. At no previous period in the world's history has the conveniences and comforts of life been so great and so generally diffused. There is nothing to prevent the lowliest from scaling the highest pinnacles of knowledge, and so acquiring the most extensive power. They may, "by the jewels which the exploring mind brings from the caves of knowledge, buy their ransom from the twin jailors of the daring

heart, low birth and iron fortune." And yet with all these advantages, and all these possibilities, which are not merely so in theory, but practical evidence of their verity can be pointed to on every hand, men of the present age are not more happy nor more contented than those who have preceded them. It is here, indeed, that we find in all ages, in all classes, and in all conditions of men, a true and indisputable equality—the equality of discontent and dissatisfaction, for such are the feelings with which life seems to have inspired mankind generally. The king on his throne, the prince in his palace, the philosopher in his study, the manufacturer, the merchant, the farmer and the artizan, without exception, has each his particular grievance. A man perfectly contented with his position in life would be as great a rarity as the mastodon, and the strange thing is that it is those whose positions seem the most enviable that are the greatest grumblers. Happiness, our being's end and aim, is a sort of mirage, which, while luring us on, successfully avoids our possession, so that to all the rapture of pursuing is the only prize that's gained. "All is vanity and vexation of spirit,"

said the wise man of the East, and the experience of mankind generally seems confirmatory of this dictum. The literature of the world is replete with the pessimistical utterances of its great men, who found the prize they gained, and which at the distance looked so enchanting, was but dead sea fruit. Lord Byron compared his life to a sere and faded yellow leaf when he was at the height of his fame. Lord Beaconsfield, whose phenomenal success in life has been a beacon to the ambitious, declared that youth was a blunder, manhood a struggle, and old age a regret, and of the rest of the men of genius or of power similar evidence of discontent might invariably be given. There is something pitiable in such sentiments, and the man who can go through life and find that its only lesson is that man is "made to mourn," is deserving of our sympathy, and might well envy the philosophy of Cowper's jackdaw. The prevalence of such sentiments is directly attributable to men's disposition to make comparisons. These are always, as Mrs. Grundy wisely remarked, odious things, and certainly by no means comforting. Jack compares himself with his master, and his master

with some other Jack's master, with results perfectly satisfactory to themselves, but altogether irreconcilable with the positions in which, by the verdict of the world, they find themselves placed. The bantam cock that thought the sun got up to hear him crow was modest when compared with the estimate of their own importance which the majority of men form. Men's actual ability and worth are usually so very different to their exaggerated conceptions of them, that we might all well exclaim in the language of Scotland's bard, "Ah, would some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us." Undoubtedly others can form a more correct opinion of our merits and demerits than we can ourselves, and as it is impossible to assume that there is a conspiracy organised to repress and under-rate any particular individual, we will be tolerably safe in accepting the verdict of the world as a just and a true one, unbiased or uninfluenced by any personal consideration. Each individual may therefore rest assured that in this world he will receive full value for any marketable qualification he may possess; but he must not be disappointed if he does not manage to get them

accepted at his own valuation. This being so unreliable, owing to the activity of the "personal equation," is set aside in favour of the juster estimate of his fellow-men, which usually differs so widely from his own that he is amazed at their obtuseness, and discredits and disbelieves the accuracy of their judgment. As, however, he has no power of insisting on his own appraisal being admitted, and no means of compelling conformity to his opinion on that particular subject, the natural result is discontent and unhappiness, and a settled conviction, in too many cases, that it is nothing but the dulness of others which prevents him occupying a better position, unless, indeed, when he favours the other absurd conclusion that it is dread of his rivalry which induces his superiors to discountenance his advancement. In my opinion there is no really clever or capable man, who does not ultimately find his proper position in the world, while there is no power which can for long succeed in keeping a senseless dullard from sinking to his level, and while this to many may be a disagreeable doctrine, it would be much better to adopt it gracefully than go whining

through life on the supposition that others, less deserving, are more lucky than ourselves, and so live miserable in the constant contemplation of how happy we might have been had the world not been so slow to recognise our worth. Had even our fondest expectations become realities, it is not alone possible, but highly probable that our real comfort and happiness would have been no greater. We do not depend upon external conditions for the possession of these. Our mind is our empire, and with contented thoughts we may have that repose which is unknown to the head that wears a crown; and it is here that we may and do have an equality which is indisputable. Just as the various substances in nature have various capacities for heat, so the various human beings have varying capacities for enjoyment, due to the difference in their receptive powers, and it is conceivable that a standard could be formed for determining the conditions most favourable to the happiness of each. This, however, would require an exactitude in knowledge of antecedents and environment which would be difficult of attainment; but if undertaken by a disinterested tribunal, with power to

command the necessary data, it is highly probable that the finding in the vast majority of cases would be that they are in the position most conducive to their happiness. In our differences, therefore, we discover a truer equality than any which could be induced by an annihilation of all varieties. The standard of each is determined by his surroundings, and the law of evolution insures man adapting himself to every change of circumstances, so that all external inequalities are compensated for. This enables us to understand something of the divine equity, and to realise that the true philosophy of life is to disregard the extreme dissimilarity of conditions, which is inseparable from social existence, and recognising that we may live happy and useful lives where we are, and believing in that Divinity which shapes our ends, we may feel convinced that if our occupation of another and higher position would be conducive of any good purpose, we shall find ourselves gradually drifted to it without any anxious efforts on our part. Above all, we must bear in mind that the most successful life is not necessarily the life that is one of constant advancement in wealth and power,

but, on the contrary, the life really worth living is more commonly that of him who can with sincerity adopt the language of the old poet who wrote :—

“ My conscience is my crown,
Contented thoughts my rest,
My heart is happy in itself,
My bliss is in my breast.”

THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE.

What constitutes the rightful basis of property? What is it that enables a man to justly say of a thing, it is mine? From what springs the sentiment which acknowledges his exclusive right, as against all the world? Is it not primarily the right of a man to himself, to the use of his own powers, to the enjoyment of the fruits of his own exertions? Is it not this individual right which springs from and is testified to by the natural facts of individual organisation. . . .

And for this reason that which a man makes or produces is his own, as against all the world—to enjoy or to destroy, to use, to exchange or to give. No one else can rightfully claim it, and his exclusive right involves no wrong to anyone else. Thus there is to everything produced by human exertion a clear and indisputable title to exclusive possession and enjoyment, which is perfectly consistent with justice, as it descends from the original producer in whom it is vested by natural law. . . . Have we made the earth that we should determine the rights of those who after us shall determine it in their turn? If the land belongs to the people, why continue to permit land-owners to take the rent, or compensate them in any manner for the loss of rent?

HENRY GEORGE—*Progress and Poverty*.

THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE.

THE ever-increasing intensity of the struggle for existence has borne fruit in the ever-multiplying theories for the reformation of social life which have characterised the last few decades. Not that there is in reality anything very novel in the schemes which are from time to time propounded with all the zeal which a new gospel could inspire. Most of the reforms advocated are but old ideas resurrected, and with their former rejections forgotten, germinate and flourish in the unnatural atmosphere induced by the distempered imagination of their advocates. Effects of present social adjustments are painted in such dark colours, and the proposed remedy represented in such a glowing light, that we can scarcely be surprised that, as if by some subtle process of mental legerdemain, we find honest, honourable, and well-intentioned people constrained to give their adhesion to principles which, if they only followed them to their logical conclusions,

they would find were the exact parallel of the highway-man's code of morals, who robbed the rich that he might benefit the poor. However admirable the latter part of his programme might be considered, it did not excuse the former; no more does the possibility of a more uniform distribution of wealth making a greater number happy in any way justify the proposal to communalise wealth, nor to nationalise land. That they are listened to at all is due not so much to the existence of a latent buccaneering tendency in mankind generally, as to the fact that they are propagated with an enthusiasm which leaves little doubt as to the sincerity of their sponsors; and that they do contain a certain moiety of truth which, emphasised to the exclusion of its complementary part, is most difficult to refute. This, indeed, is the stronghold of any popular reform, as were it false in all its premises, and erroneous in all its conclusions, it would never secure so many disciples as would serve to, even for a time, rescue it from that lethe of the forgotten, which its inherent falsity would ensure.

The half truth on which the enunciation of the doctrine of the land for the people is based is that the "Land

is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and as we are all His children we are all equally entitled to its possession. Our equal right is supposed to be proved by the fact that it being indispensable to existence, and being a voluntary gift of the Creator's, it is evidently intended for all. It never seems to occur to the advocates of this theory, much less to their followers, that being an essential of life, all that live must in reality have the use of it, so that the only question that can arise is, Have all the full use of it to which they are entitled? The Georgite school answer this in the negative, pointing to the vast numbers in all crowded cities to whom the sight of a green field is of rare occurrence; but the earth does not consist alone of green fields and flowery meads, it is as real in the city covered with warehouses as in the country covered with vegetation. In both cases, also, the labour of man is represented, although in such widely different forms, and in both it is to the largest extent that labour which gives the land its value. Densely as the world is populated to-day, there are still vast areas which can be had for the mere appropriating, and yet the most enthusiastic admirers of land nationalisa-

tion show no desire to go forth and take possession. The fact is that they know that by doing so they would have to undergo great hardships, and probable dangers; that they would have to submit to voluntary exile, and be deprived of the benefits of civilisation, which, much as they may in theory disparage, they in practice avail themselves of fully. The clearing of the backwoods, the fertilising of the prairies, and the overcoming of all natural obstacles to cultivation are not so very agreeable, and there are comparatively few who will undertake these herculean tasks even when stimulated by the prospective advantages which would accrue to their posterity by their having been first in the virgin fields. Virgin land therefore is comparatively valueless, as, notwithstanding its latent possibilities, it is situated at such a distance from the "busy haunts of men" as to discount its fertility, so that it is not alone the labour of man, indispensable as that is, which is required to give it value, but the settlement of communities, and the facility of intercourse with other districts. In primitive times, and before labour had been expended upon any land, it would not be any violation of our

sense of justice to conceive of all men as having equal rights to its possession, and probably this was the accepted maxim so long as barbaric conditions prevailed ; but the inequality of men, and the widely different positions in which they were placed, would quickly produce modifications of these primal rights. The man of courage and daring would not for long be content to keep his flocks on the probably meagre, and rapidly exhausting herbage in the immediate vicinity of his birthplace, but leaving this to his more timid brethren, would seek richer pasturage further afield, where he would settle, and aided by the natural advantages of the site, would form the nucleus of a whole community, increasing the value of the land by labour, and still more by the numbers which congregated. By the enterprise displayed, the courage evinced, the dangers overcome, and the subsequent labour he undertook, which rendered the land continuously fertile, there was established an indefeasible right to its use, which it would ill conform to our sentiments of justice to challenge. That he did not make the land itself would not weaken the right ; it was occupancy which made it what

it is, and it would not be complete, it would not be truly valuable, if not identified with the only right which could compensate for the exceptional toil involved—that is, the right of transmission and transfer.

Without this there would not be sufficient incentive to lead to the exploitation of new areas, and if the results were to be the inheritance not of those with whom we were immediately and personally connected, but to belong to all humanity, much as we may love our neighbours it would not stimulate us to those tasks with which the material progress of the world is indissolubly connected. We thus see what constitutes the basis of the fee-simple of land; we recognise its necessity which establishes its justice, and so are no longer in danger of being deluded by those who declare an equality which can only exist under those early conditions which make it destitute of advantage and are incompatible with the principles of equity, which are a creation of society in its more developed stages. Amongst the original communities there would be little internecine strife regarding this appropriation as being connected under a single head for mutual protection,

and the conditions of life being so simple, the stress of circumstance would not be so acute as to cause dissatisfaction. The communities, however, who found themselves in sterile places, and in whose breasts the desire of something better would originate, in their wanderings would come into conflict with the communities settled in the lands flowing with milk and honey, and, if they were victors, would possess themselves of the more fertile districts, making the original inhabitants serfs or expelling them altogether. This is the claim upon which the right to much land is vested, and this, as well as that of first occupancy, after the lapse of time, is occasionally superseded by the right of purchase; all of which, surely, are equally valid. No man is more worthy of his hire than the soldier who has given faithful and unfaltering support to his leader throughout the various vicissitudes of a long and arduous campaign. Having in the chosen cause borne privation, faced danger, and braved death, if, instead of defeat, victory falls to their banner, is it to be wondered at that the vanquished are spoiled of their possessions, which are distributed as a reward amongst

the followers of the victor? The right to the most of the land in our own country is founded upon the basis of conquest, and at the time it was granted it was in most cases a barren enough gift and but poorly compensated its receivers for their services. The march of civilisation has vastly increased the value of these estates, so that now when it is sought to deprive the descendants of these men of what their forefathers fought and bled and died for, it is a really valuable asset. Some of those who obtained grants immediately transferred them for very trifling considerations, such as even a fresh charger, but others retained them, and after the lapse of time their descendants through the necessities of fortune have transferred their right for large sums of money to successful merchants or professional men,—money which they had made by honest industry; and of these fruits of their toil, the morality of many is so debased by the specious arguments of land nationalists, that it would consent to dispossess them. Surely so long as the sense of justice and fair play remain active in the breasts of humanity in general, no such scheme will ever have a serious chance of being adopted.

What are the arguments by which these bold reformers would delude the unwary and justify their immense scheme of confiscation? The first and most important, indeed, that which may be considered almost the alpha and omega of the whole question, is that of limiting a man's right to the possession of property, to those things which he has actually produced by his own labour; for a cardinal article of the Georgite faith is that the only thing which can confer a valid title is the production by human labour, which carries with it the right of transfer. There are many things which a man has not made, and in which his right to possession would be unquestioned by the most ardent disciple of this school of political philosophers, first amongst these is the right to himself. Indeed, with unconscious inconsistency, the right of a man to himself is assumed as an axiom, and placed side by side with the other irreconcilable axiom which forms the foundation of the whole theory that he has no right to anything which he does not make. Neither does the legal enactment of any country confirm Mr. George's assumption that whatever a man produces is his against all the world, to enjoy or to destroy, to use, to exchange, or to

give. The contrary is the case, for if he produces a gun he cannot use it as he pleases, and if gunpowder he can only destroy it under great restrictions; and there are many things which he can only produce at all by the consent of society, and transfer only under very definite regulations. Therefore not only is this fundamental principle erroneous in fact, but it is based upon a conception of things which in reality is non-existent. When we speak of man as producing, we use a brief and convenient method of expression, but it is, of course, merely a fiction. Man produces nothing, he only changes that which is produced by Him who created not alone the land but all that therein is, so that when the supposed clinching argument is advanced that the land cannot belong to individuals, because none of them has made a single piece, it is a mere superficial statement which might be applied with equal force to every article in the universe; for did Nature not produce the necessary materials for man's manipulation, these would be non-existent. The change wrought on the materials is not greater, in many cases not so great, as the changes which man

has made on land. The pen of Mr. George's illustration, to which he conceived himself as possessing an indefeasible claim owing to its production through successive stages, and transfer through innumerable series of purchase from the original producer, was not more different to the ore from which it was smelted than was the city of New York in which he was writing to the original site when the waves of the broad Atlantic washed it in its desolateness previous to its discovery by Europeans. Both are the gratuitous offerings of Nature, and in both would it be equally difficult to separate the original form from the modified. If, therefore, the appropriation of what Nature provides is inconsistent with the decrees of justice, we are necessarily forced into the conclusion that man cannot in equity possess any property, because man cannot create anything, but only alter the relative positions of that material which has been gratuitously provided by Nature. The admission of the principle that all men had equal rights to Nature's bounty would probably lead to very complicated results, as many might be tempted to defer putting forth their claim

until a certain amount of transformation had taken place, and it would then be a very difficult and a very delicate matter to separate what belonged to the general fund from what belonged to the individual. The property of the latter would, of course, be simply the added value by the labour expended, and as the primary matter would be supposed to be inalienable from the nation, or, in short, nationalised, it would be most troublesome; in fact, we might almost say it would be impracticable to define where the one ended and the other began in case of a claim being unexpectedly preferred against a certain mass of matter with a certain amount of work expended upon it, but which it might be considered was being unduly and disadvantageously appropriated.

We may without hesitation dismiss as untenable the assumption that the only valid right to property is that resting on production, because it would be incompatible with the continuation of any property at all, as all the men since creation's hour began never absolutely made any single article existing; they have but altered, and their impress is left as much

on land as on any commodity, so that its inclusion as property rests on exactly the same basis as that of chattels. So thoroughly impregnated was Mr. George and his more devoted disciples with his doctrine, that with all the thoroughness which has characterised them, they have not flinched from accepting the logical conclusions. This, of course, is that the land being the people's, those who have so long been in possession should be forced to make restitution without compensation, and should indeed be duly thankful for not having to make fuller reparation for the wrongs they have done the community. It is only when accepted in this thorough and uncompromising manner that it can secure adhesion even from the most unthinking. If once the old-world notions of equity and right which most of the British disciples profess, and which appears to require compensation in the interests of justice, are admitted, the doom of his theory is emphatically pronounced. If only the unearned increment about which so much is said is to be appropriated by the nation, no advantage would accrue from the "glorious treachery," owing to the equitable

compensation involving such a large sum. A definition of what is meant by the unearned increment is scarcely necessary, as those who have taken even a cursory interest in social subjects must have heard it glibly explained over and over again by land nationalists. It is stated to be the increased value of land due not to the exertions of its holders, but to the favouring circumstances, such as adaptability for commercial purposes, the growth of population in its immediate vicinity, and such like. These being due to causes which can in no way be credited to the holders more than to the other members of the community, should not be the exclusive property of any. This, at first sight, appears a reasonable proposition, and is much more likely to obtain adherents than that which demands that the land shall be sequestered altogether from those who have been in possession for so long that the mind of man runneth not to the contrary. In reality, however, it is only a less objectionable manner of expressing an identical proposition, and its danger lies in its plausibility. The difference between the value of the desert and the city plot is

due principally to the fact that in the latter large communities are settled. This constitutes its greatest value, and, were it isolated, no amount of fertility, no expenditure of labour, could appreciably affect its value, and if Aladdin's genii of the ring erected therein palaces, warehouses and hotels, its unearned increment would be still non-existent. The conclusion, therefore, is, that by appropriating the unearned increment you, strictly speaking, appropriate its entire value, although you appear to allow something substantial to remain. It is, indeed, insidious attacks like these which are most to be dreaded, because even those who would scorn to be identified with a system of plunder may be induced to give their adhesion to such an apparently equitable thing as what the whole community has created should be divided amongst them equally. The fact that a community is settled in a given place is due to those who first occupied it, making it so pleasant that others are drawn thereto, instead of seeking elsewhere unclaimed tracts for their own appropriation. By doing so they obtain all the advantages of association which must appear to compensate for

their deprivation of real property, or they would not remain in the district. It is therefore difficult to see why the unearned increment should be treated differently from any other property.

If the question of land nationalisation ever emerges from the theoretical to the domain of practical politics, there will still remain a sufficient sense of justice to ensure an equitable compensation being tendered to those who will be dispossessed, as notwithstanding the small estimation in which professional reformers hold vested rights, there are too many interests involved to permit of forcible expropriation of landlords, without the payment of their fares. The question, therefore, necessarily arises, What would be a just compensation, and, if it were paid, what would be the net advantage to the nation? According to Mr. Giffen's estimate, the purchase-value of the landlords of Great Britain would be about £1,691,313,000, which would mean the raising of nearly £60,000,000, at the very moderate rate of $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ interest. The cost of collection *pro rata* with the cost of collecting the present revenue would be about £7,000,000, or a total of £67,000,000

to be raised for the funded debt. Now the total rent roll at present is only £65,000,000 in round numbers, so that instead of being gainers by the change, the yearly holders would be mulcted in £2,000,000, and this without conferring any advantage to the community at large. The special argument upon which land nationalisers base their claim is that by adopting the arrangement, enough would be extracted for its use to pay the entire expenses of government, and as this at present is about £90,000,000 per annum, that would have to be raised in addition to the £67,000,000 before the scheme realised its expectations. This £90,000,000 includes collection, so that if the whole was placed upon land the cost of collection would probably be considerably decreased, and we might assume only £80,000,000 as the additional rent that would be required were we to compensate the present recognised holders, and obtain the advantage of taxations on commodities being removed. Truly the poor tiller would find the little finger of the government as strong as the thigh of the landlord, and while he uses whips it would use scorpions.

The robbery is to be disguised as much as possible, and to be begun by taxing the land to such an extent that it would in effect be putting up the land to auction, to whoever would pay the highest rent to the State, "and we are informed it would cost as much to keep a row of tumble-down shanties upon valuable land as though it were covered with a grand hotel, or a pile of great warehouses filled with costly goods;" from which it is apparent that among its other marvels it would make the land in the worst districts equally valuable with those in the most prominent and important. We are accustomed to find shanties only continuing on land that is by position unsuitable for hotels and warehouses; and under existing conditions, when material progress has been sufficient to justify it, they disappear. In what way, however, would or could it be any advantage to the farmer to have the land he occupies put up for auction by the State; and we must assume that it would be necessary to have this done periodically, for the State being the depositor for the entire people, would not be justified in allowing fixity of tenure to any individuals lest they should be de-

priving the other partners in the ownership of the advantage which would accrue from the competition for its possession. This would indeed appear to inaugurate a worse form of rack-renting than what we have heard of even in Ireland. Consider the effect upon the community at large; the selling price of the farmers' produce is governed by the cost of production, and as in their case rent is a primary and important part of this, the crop must be sold, in all ordinary seasons at any rate, at a price to cover this with a fair wage for the labour expended and interest on capital, or they will not continue the business. Once they see their way to make this under normal circumstances and with a reasonable prospect of having a fair return, their produce will be sold for whatever price the demand for it creates. There is nothing more self-evident than the law of supply and demand operate in their case with particular certainty because the vast bulk of their food are necessities, and if the crop is a meagre one, the inevitable result of high prices will ensue, no matter what the cost of production has been. If the harvest is plentiful, low rates prevail; so that in their case even if it were possible to reduce

rents to the most nominal amount, if their crops were scant they would have to receive famine prices. As, however, the necessity would be forced upon the nation of increasing rents, it would simply have the effect of permanently raising the standard of prices, and perhaps in a greater proportion than the enhanced rent, because a greater capital would be required for entering upon the business, and a greater return would then be wanted.

The rent that is paid for land does not increase the relative cost of goods nor add to the difficulty of living. The sum that is paid is in a certain sense for the use of land, but more particularly it is for the improvements that have been made, or else for its natural superiority, and just counterbalances the differing degrees of fertility and accessibility. Nothing is more self-evident in a large city than that the very heavy rents paid for favouring positions do not in reality affect the price of the goods sold. The contrary is the case ; as we find that in the very heart of large cities where rents are highest, goods are sold cheaper than in the suburban districts or country villages where the rental is, comparatively speaking, infinitesimal. No maxim is more generally

accepted by business men than that, given the proper position, the rent may be disregarded.

The desideration of land nationalisation, the payment of all the expenses of the State from the ground tax, and so relieving the general public of a burden, must in the nature of things continue an impossibility. All that is collected in this way must be repaid by the people at large, in the increased prices which would prevail in all products. The application of such a single tax would be capable of the grossest mismanagement and favouritism by the Government officials, and we have not yet reached that exalted state where jobbery is unknown. The scheme could only be carried out effectively by disregarding the rights of the present holders, and so violating every principle of good government. As a consequence of its adoption, we should expect a loosening of the cohesion which binds society together, and which depends to a very large extent upon the known continuity of legal enactments. This scheme is therefore destitute of expediency, destructive of confidence, and devoid of any real benefit to the community.

PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

In every direction the direct tendency of advancing civilisation is to increase the power of human labour, to satisfy human desires, to extirpate poverty, and to banish want, and the fear of want. All the things in which progress consists, all the conditions which progressive communities are striving for, have for their direct and natural result the improvement of the material and consequently the intellectual and moral condition of all within their influence. The growth of population, the increase and extension of exchanges, the discoveries of science, the march of invention, the spread of education, the improvement of government, and the amelioration of manners, considered as material forces, have all a direct tendency to increase the productive power of labour, not of some labour, but of all labour, not in some departments of industry, but in all departments of industry, for the law of the production of wealth in society is each for all and all for each. . . . There are many persons who still retain the comfortable belief that material progress will ultimately extirpate poverty, and there are many who look to prudential restraints upon the increase of population as the most efficacious means.

HENRY GEORGE—*Progress and Poverty*.

PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

MR. HENRY GEORGE'S book on Progress and Poverty was deserving of all the popularity it attained. Written by a warm-hearted and generous man, with all the wealth of diction that unquestioning belief in the verity of the new factor of social life he had discovered could inspire, it is in no way surprising that it possessed many remarkable features. Not the least noteworthy of these was the unbounded confidence evinced in the power of his panacea to revolutionise life, and the scornful and unqualified condemnation of nearly all previously accepted canons of political philosophy. The message that he had for humanity, and which he had absolutely no doubt was one of peace, was fraught with doctrines decidedly original, enunciated in a decidedly novel manner, and advocated with a fervour which often trenches on dogmatism. The language, always ornate in the extreme, is frequently a model of that vigorous ex-

pression which originates in the certainty of being in the right, and the enthusiasm which results from an unhesitating conviction of having solved the problem which had baffled all former inquirers in the same field, and found for humanity at large the narrow way out of that labyrinth of poverty which had been the fruitful source of the sin and suffering of the race. No man ever saw more clearly nor painted more vividly the misery in which large masses of men exist ; no man ever saw more clearly through the shallowness and inefficiency which characterised the remedies which other thinkers on social subjects had propounded with an enthusiasm in their sufficiency not inferior to his own ; no man, however, ever believed more implicitly in his own remedy, nor denounced more emphatically the barriers which prevented its adoption, while he spurned with contempt almost the remedies which had before been advocated, and demonstrated in brief but unmistakable logic their fallacies. It is certainly an interesting mental study to observe the keenness which is exhibited in demolishing the pet projects of others, with the entire insensibility to any possible factor which might weaken his own theory

or in practice invalidate it. The fact that practical results seldom conform exactly to theoretical expectations, did not suggest any disquieting apprehensions to his mind, and the spectacle of the innumerable errors, which he proved to his own satisfaction, at any rate, that even the acutest intellects that have adorned our race had given the sanction of their authority to, did not make him doubt either the correctness of his premises or the accuracy of his conclusions.

The factors of the problem of social life are, according to him, increasing wealth, and increasing and intensifying poverty, and this in despite of the fact that the State within its boundary possessed more than enough to satisfy all. Men, women, and children starving, or forced into crime and dishonour to escape its pangs, while, at the same time, the necessities of life were abundant in the community; numbers huddled together in small, scantily-furnished, unsanitary garrets, while there were in the district ample areas for comfortable healthy dwellings unused; wealth the most magnificent, poverty the most intense, jostling each other on the highway and in the street, and this, too, without apparently any inherent

difference in the physical, mental or moral capacity of the representatives of the two classes. The fact that there is no reason for supposing that the existing differences amongst humanity are inherent, but are simply the product of the different environments, for which the individuals themselves are in the main very little responsible, leads naturally to the conclusion that they do not exist by any decree of the Creator, but are the result of the unjust system of appropriation of natural resources, which has been concurred in by humanity in general, and the consequent inequitable distribution of the products of labour. There is just enough truth in this representation of the prevailing condition of society to form the basis of a popular creed, and so we are not in any way astonished to find it quickly out-distanced all other reforms, and won numerous converts to its standard. On every hand the truth of the premises appeared to be verified, and even the most implacable opponent of the Georgite doctrine must admit that, in every great enlightened and progressive city of the world, we find not alone that wealth, luxury, and culture, which characterises civilisation, but we find also the greatest poverty, the

deepest degradation, and a distortion or perversion of intelligence which is worse than the crude ignorance of barbarism. The poverty, too, is of a kind unknown in the barbaric state ; it is the entire exclusion from the sources from which sustenance can be directly drawn, and it is this which is held to constitute the peculiar hardships of civilisation. The fact that under the modern system of co-operative production by masses of men living in association, human labour obtains a very high rate of efficiency, and can without undue effort produce more than enough to satisfy, in a luxurious manner, the wants of all, does not confer the advantage which theoretically it should, owing to a certain number having acquired a right to the surplus goods, the consumption of which, under the modern conditions of life, are a necessary precedent to re-production. These relatively few are, therefore, in the position of controlling absolutely subsequent production, and in theory, if not in practice, life itself to the majority depends upon their caprices, as in civilised society it depends not so much on a man's ability or desire to work, as in his being able to obtain an advance of the essentials of existence from

those in whom is vested the natural resources of the country, and those who possess its reserve funds. In short, in the language of Burns, he has to ask his fellow-worm to give him leave to toil before he can exercise his powers productively.

This aspect of the case, when emphasised without regard to the other factors of the problem of social life, has an undoubted appearance of iniquity, and any doctrine which holds forth a reasonable prospect of doing away with the seemingly iniquitous system is assured of popularity. The antidote of the Georgite theory is to be found in the omitted factors, which, indeed, contain the essence of the whole subject. Nature uncultivated is not sufficiently bountiful to sustain the volume of human life at present on the globe, and it is to man's power of realising and availing himself of favouring circumstances that we are indebted for the obtaining of the necessaries of life for the numbers which are supported on the cultivated area. In the earlier stages of human existence, when natural resources are unappropriated, vast areas are populated by relatively small numbers, who obtain the necessaries of life with

difficulty from the spontaneous productions of Nature ; but, as a consequence of not cultivating and assisting nature, nor of making provision for future contingencies, they constantly experience the greatest hardships, and, for all, the starvation point is unceasingly within measurable distance. To such an extent is this the case, that under primitive conditions population, which is the certain index of material prosperity, is practically stationary, and the deliberate destruction of the aged and infirm, and, in fact, of all incapable of preserving themselves, is frequently resorted to by barbaric peoples. That such an expedient should be found necessary under conditions where the purest theoretical equality undoubtedly prevails with an entire absence of the appropriation of the material properties, is the most conclusive evidence of the inability of Nature to provide without the assistance of man's labour for all possible inhabitants. Even with the most rigorous system of improved cultivation, her capacity to support life is limited, and it is the proximity of Nature's limit which, in all stages of existence, causes the struggle for survival. The expansion of the limit, which is due to human devices,

is not indefinite, and no matter what the wealth that may be stored, as soon as population begins to press on the means of subsistence, the natural and intense struggle for survival begins to be specially experienced. That its effects have been postponed, and the volume of life so greatly increased, is due to man's improvements and adaptation of means to ends, and a precedent to all these has been that permanency of occupation without which progress and invention would be non-existent. This permanency of possession denies, indeed, to the later comers the right of appealing directly to Nature for support, but, in the absence of the restriction, their presence at all would be impossible.

We are not now concerned with the much discussed question as to whether existence is such a boon as to be particularly grateful for; suffice it to say that the vast majority of those possessing appreciate it, much as they may grumble, and few there be who willingly seek to escape. Poverty is co-existent with man's being, but in the primitive state it is the most grinding and intense. It is not alone poverty of material goods but of mental attainments. In certain directions it may be

urged that primitive people possess qualities superior to those of civilised man, and it cannot be denied that, so far as adaptability to their particular circumstances are concerned, this is true ; but what a wealth, not alone of material goods, but of accumulated knowledge and experience, of mental compass and adaptability, does the latter inherit. It is this wealth, which is a creation of civilisation, which is its most important characteristic ; and it is due entirely to the appreciation of the necessity of utilising and adopting the particular circumstances, by which he is surrounded, to his needs, which is the outcome of association, and reaches its highest position in the most advanced stages of society. It does not, indeed, eliminate poverty from the world, but it ensures all being proportionately better provided for than what would be possible under natural conditions. Civilisation progresses and is distinguished in its course, not by an increase of poverty, but by its proportional diminution. Every improved method introduced for accomplishing work reduces necessarily the arduousness of toil in all classes, and leaves free whole classes to devote their time, their energy, and their intelligence to the investiga-

tion and extension of the sum of knowledge. The appearance of reason in the doctrine that poverty is only increased by material progress consists in the sharp contrast into which it brings the extremes of society, and which to onlookers makes life to some appear not worth living. It must not, however, be forgotten that the standard of comfort differs in each class, and it is only by applying that which is applicable to the highest to the condition of those in the lowest rank that we are led to believe that misery and unhappiness are the constant companions of most. In reality, the good-natured philanthropist gives himself a world of unnecessary trouble on the subject, and if he were practically acquainted with the inmost thoughts and feelings of those whom he most commiserates, he would probably find their state as little to be deplored as his own. The professional man glories in his successes and prominence amongst his brother professionals; the merchant in the extent and profitable nature of his business; the manufacturer in the magnitude and superiority of his operations; the honest workman in his work, and the satisfaction of duty well done; the pests of society in the successful

eluding of justice, and in the very impunity and guilt which has characterised their depredations.

The different classes, as a rule, have no real sympathy or appreciation of the standard to which the others tacitly subscribe; and while the denizens of the slums may compare their material circumstances disadvantageously with those of the affluent, they are utterly incapable of understanding the different mental attitudes that counteract the effects of the more favourable surroundings; and just as little can the affluent realise the attitude of the outcasts of society which enables them to extract a full measure of happiness from what to them appears to be intolerable circumstances. The question is altogether one of adaptability, and no beneficial results can ever accrue from comparing the lots of those whose environments educe irreconcilable qualities, and consequently whose comfort, so far from being conserved, would be irretrievably destroyed by establishing a sameness of externals. The most of the unhappiness and discomfort in the world exists not on account of dissimilarity of fortune, nor among any particular class of the community, but is

originated and perpetuated by the jealousy of those possessing an average amount of knowledge and a great amount of sensitiveness, of others whom they consider more particularly favoured by fortune while in reality less deserving than themselves. The consequence is that there is less real misery amongst the lowest class of society than any other, because there is more of the pachydermata in their nature, and so they are more invulnerable to the caprices of the fickle jade—fortune.

It is interesting to note the arguments which the author of "Progress and Poverty" depends on for establishing his theory and destroying the teaching of the classical economists on the subject. "High wages (the mark of the relative scarcity of labour) must be accompanied by low interest (the mark of the relative abundance of capital), and reversely low wages must be accompanied by high interest . . . if the current teaching of political economy is accurate." This is not the case, however, he informs us, but on the contrary interest is high where wages are high, and low where wages are low. In impartially considering the case with

the view of getting at the truth rather than of buttressing a theory, the first point to be considered is the state of the society to which the arguments are to be applied; for it must be self-evident that what will be true in regard to a congested state, and one which has attained to a high standard of attainments, will not necessarily be equally valid for one just emerging from barbarism and having still to perform those works of improvement which change the face of Nature but which are now the necessities of civilised society. Such a state, with its sparse population and crude appliances, if it can obtain the advantages of the use of the accumulated capital of previously settled districts, will be able to pay for it a high rate of interest, while at the same time labour will also receive a high return owing to the number of those available being scanty, and the discomfort and inconvenience attendant upon life in that state being so great as to restrict immigration unless at a vastly enhanced rate of remuneration. The factors there are not alone scarcity of labourers, but suitable objects for the employment of capital, which are the two factors wanting in older countries where

the modification of Nature to the requirements of humanity has continued for so long that there remains but little outlet for the expenditure of capital. So much is this the case in long-settled countries that the limits of industry would be reached were it not for the intercourse with the more recently exploited to whom they send mechanism and finished products in exchange for the natural produce which they can so abundantly provide. In old countries, therefore, the relatively low rate of wages prevails, not on account of scarcity of capital, but by reason of the few suitable openings for its employment, which also makes the rate of interest low. The value of labour is also depreciated by the fact that the numbers seeking employment are disproportionate to the work to be done, and the consequent competition depreciates the rate of labour beyond the natural value ; and though there is still open to humanity vast tracts of territory to be brought under the influence of civilisation and cultivation, there are comparatively few who have been accustomed to the conveniences of modern society who will voluntarily exile themselves, and undergo the privation and danger

of being the pioneers of new colonies. The high rate of interest paid by new countries for capital therefore is seen to be the natural concomitant of a high rate of wages, just as low wages and low interest distinguish and are inseparably connected with long-established communities. New countries are now-a-days always exploited by the capital drawn from the old where it has no outlet, and those who have the courage and energy to leave their home and friends can there secure a better remuneration at the expense of the many disadvantages which attend life in a young country.

We are told that London is no poorer to-day owing to the great fire of 1666, nor Chicago because of that of 1870, both of which statements are probably accurate. The effects of these disasters were immediate, and they were repaired by the immediate hardships, privations and suffering of the people then living. During the replacing of the material wealth which had been destroyed there were less goods available for consumption, and consequently for a year or two a lessened standard of comfort and convenience; but this, of course, naturally and quickly disappeared. It is interesting to note,

however, that these catastrophes which destroyed for a time the material inequality of men did not do so permanently, and that out of them men of enterprise and capacity made fortunes rapidly, and soon left the less capable far behind.

The poverty, sin, and misery which prevails is sufficiently intense to arouse in the breasts of all a sincere desire to alleviate them, but this can never be done by a carping criticism of existing institutions. Let us look at the real facts of the case, and, discarding sentimental considerations, endeavour to see in what direction the regeneration of mankind may be looked for. This will be a much more useful employment of our time than in drawing doleful comparisons of the extremes to which civilised society gravitates, and asserting an equality of rights and powers which exists but in the imagination. We shall then realise that, considering the origin of our race, the basis upon which just social institutions are possible to be erected, and the gradual and natural evolution of existing conditions, it is to the superficial alone that inequity will be apparent. Mankind has evolved very slowly and

extended over the whole cultivable portion of the globe. In its course of development new difficulties have constantly had to be overcome and new dangers faced, and with each additional experience a modifying conception of life and duty was introduced. It is to the extension of the finer conception of human destiny that we must ever look for any permanent improvement in the lots of humanity in general; but its rapid extension is impeded by the increasing density of population more than keeping pace with the food supply in old countries, and so compelling that strenuous competition for existence which is incompatible with the practical acceptance of the highest teaching. The salvation of the race, therefore, appears to consist in the restricting of population, which can be done in several ways, but must be done in some, and every year as it rolls along brings the question more within the practical limit. Intense competition, with the relentless crush of those least equipped for the struggle, will check the numbers while it contributes to progress, but the same end may be attained in a more desirable manner by elevating the standard of comfort amongst mankind, so that a natural

barrier to undue increase will be established. The tendency seems to be towards a voluntary acceptance of this method, and improvement in the general material welfare of mankind will be in exact proportion to its adoption, which is the only panacea for poverty.

DREAMLANDS.

I had but dreamed of that enlightened and care-free race of men and their ingeniously simple institutions ; of the glorious New Boston with its domes and pinnacles, its gardens and fountains, and its universal reign of comfort.

EDWARD BELLAMY—*Looking Backward*.

Competition means secrecy and over-reachingness, while in co-operation none seek advantages for themselves save such as are compatible with the equal interests of others. To do this, the co-operators must have knowledge of the art of association, which has no professors and no literature.

G. J. HOLYOAKE—*The Co-operative Movement To-day*.

DREAMLANDS.

THE human race has never been left without its prophets, priests and kings. To every age and in every clime there has come the voice, as of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way, make straight the path for the perfect state which we foresee. Long before the Christian era, discontent with social arrangements prevailed, their imperfections and inequities were discussed, and the conditions of an ideal and perfectly happy state were outlined. The republic of Plato equals and probably transcends the most elevated thought of modern times on world reform, and indeed it is possible that all our most valuable ideas on the subject have their source in that old pagan philosopher. No doubt the standard which the idealists have persistently kept before the world has contributed somewhat to the continued progress of mankind and the continued amelioration of the lots of humanity

in general ; but it must not be forgotten nor underrated that changing environments, changing the necessities of existence, would be inconsistent with the permanency of conditions, and the amount of improvement would be determined by the actual requirements of the circumstances rather than by the teaching of the schoolmen. The lofty conceptions of the virtuous few might season humankind, but it would be the actual wants of practical life which would give the tone to the age, and nothing that is widely different from the thought of the people at large is likely to influence the immediate remodelling of society.

The dreamlands of world improvers are always occupied by "enlightened and care-free men," and so have no parallel in actual life. We can only imagine the conditions and theorise on how they might be attained ; and consequently it is not wonderful that the visions of the various dreamers should be widely different. Some have seen, as in a glass darkly, a state in which all things have been held in common, and to require is to stretch forth the hand and possess. The practical difficulties in the way of the adoption of such a scheme

seem insurmountable, and in the highest degree undesirable. Painted by an enthusiast, nothing but universal happiness and content are shown—the former capitalist, relieved of the care which his wealth gave rise to, and the worker for ever exempt from the anxiety as to what he shall eat on the morrow, or wherewithal be clothed with, knowing that the State attendeth to these things, are left free to put forth their best efforts for the general weal. Is it, however, consonant with our experience, that in the absence of all incentives to labour, men in general attain their highest rate of efficiency? Is it not, on the contrary, the almost universal consequence of having no necessity to work, that indolence is generated and discreditable habits acquired? The socialistic scheme is evolved naturally from this communistic one, and is in many respects its superior. It recognises fairly accurately the main factors of the problem, admits the inequality of man, and does not advocate equality of rewards nor community of goods, but on the contrary desires desert to be the deciding factor in the apportionment of recompense. It is thus a much less objectionable scheme, and has succeeded in

enlisting under its banner many of the purest and best of mankind, who, with all the fidelity of ancient Crusaders, have girded on their armour and dedicated their lives, their honours and their fortunes to the destruction of the gross wrongs which they have convinced themselves prevail. The fundamental error in both cases is identical, and consists of the belief that Government can attend to the interests of individuals better than the individuals themselves; and so far does this fallacy permeate the opinions of those desirous of reform, that it is almost assumed, though not stated in so many words, that a governmental enactment could create the wealth necessary for all to live in affluence. How different the actual facts are, it is scarcely necessary to stop to indicate; but there can be nothing more apparent to anyone who will for a moment reflect on the subject than that Government can only spend the money it collects out of the pockets of the people, minus the salaries of the immense staff of officials who are usually irresponsible, and frequently inefficient and wasteful. Any money to be raised for a given purpose must come from the people, and its collection is likely to press

most hardly upon those least able to bear it. There is in this direction no creative power possible to be vested in the Government, and the experience most common is not that it is guided by any superior wisdom in its action. The ordinary and sometimes more than ordinary amount of human fallibility is evinced, and there is, as a rule, not any very striking approximation to what is called divine justice and equity in their general practices, and economy in management is not usually conspicuous except by its absence. This being the case, it is difficult to see what advantage could be secured by State intervention in the managing of affairs, but we shall deal with this point more exhaustively when we come to discuss the provisions of Bellamy's dreamland—"Looking Backward."

The pertinent question at present is, What benefits could be obtained by the adoption of the socialist scheme? Are we not under existing conditions rewarded in general according to our deserts? True, it may not always be in accordance with our own opinions of our merits, but may that not be quite as much due to our over-estimating these as to others under-estimat-

ing them? Having given services to the community, valued by it in proportion to the services of others, at a rate which enables us to acquire a surplus, how could it possibly conform even to the crudest conceptions of justice, to have that surplus trammelled by governmental restrictions, either in our method of expending, hoarding or transferring? Would such enactment be conducive to the obtaining of that superior service which most contributes to material progress? Let us face the facts and admit that such unnatural restraints would sap industry, destroy the inventive faculty, and restrict scientific investigation; for the numbers who pursue any work, manual or mental, for the sole love of it, are infinitesimal compared with those who are animated by the desire of attaining the rewards which await pre-eminence.

A co-operative commonwealth, in the modern acceptance of the term, is now very generally advocated, and is looked upon as the most feasible solution of the problem of practical life. Co-operation is, of course, co-existent with association; it is the cohesion which binds society together, and consent to it, tacit or other-

wise, is a condition indispensable to the continuance of social life. Under its original meaning, men co-operated for the furthering of the interests of their own community; but their individual interests were always the primary object. Their individual interests, however, never are or can be inimical to the general interests, so long as not actively aggressive of the rights of the other members of the community. It is now endeavoured to extend the meaning of the term, and to make it include the recognition of an identity in individual interests, hitherto unknown—in fact, to abolish individual interests, and admit of nothing but the general well-being as a sufficient justification of action. The State is to produce and to distribute all goods under a central power controlled by the people themselves, instead of by individual capitalists, as at present. The advantages are represented as being enormous, but if allowance is made for the interest necessary for the use of the funds, and the expenses of management provided for, the difference to the people at large would be inconsiderable. The scheme is by no means an untried one, as many years have elapsed since practical form was given to it by

the English reformer, Robert Owen, and since his time it has been in operation in several districts, but does not seem to rapidly gain ground. The inherent defects of the system are easily realised. Each having an interest in the business, so far from reducing, increases friction; envy is stronger, and none can see either the necessity or justice of their occupying the places of drudgery and ordinary work. After the disbanding of the American army, the country was filled with its former generals, colonels, majors and lieutenants, but there were none who admitted they had served in the ranks;—the same feelings of self-glorification would make a co-operative workshop all masters and no men. Wages could not be increased, as if nominally higher, the purchasing power would be no greater—indeed, it might be less, owing to the increased cost of production involving a larger capital on which interest would be no greater. The recognised management of such a concern would have a difficult task to perform, which the most consummate tact could scarcely discharge satisfactorily. No man can serve two masters; but under these conditions an effort would have to be made

to serve two or three dozen masters, and the result would hardly be conducive to even temper or high moral conduct. In productive employments the plan has always been found destitute of advantage to workmen; but ardent co-operators, such as Mr Holyoake, attribute this more to the seemingly benevolent capitalist hampering the boon with such conditions as destroy its efficacy, when, indeed, they can be accepted at all with credit.

In the case of distribution of products there does not seem to be necessarily the same inherent defects, but it is a matter of notoriety that private enterprise can successfully compete against any co-operative store. The latter are rarely managed with the same strict care and economy as characterise the former; they are also frequently subject to the peculation of unfaithful servants, or their bribery by interested competitors. The shareholders are usually so little conversant with business as to be able to control effectively the official in charge, and if he is a first-class and faithful man, he may be so harassed with their interference as to retire in disgust. The consequence is that permanent success rarely attends

such ventures, and at the best, the possible advantage to shareholders is the proportion of the profit made by the store, which is never so great as to counter-balance the risk and trouble incurred. The same money placed in almost any other *bonâ fide* business would yield an equal return with greater immunity from risk and an entire absence of the trouble and worry and uncertainty which are the inseparable concomitants of the scheme.

Probably no more effective attempt at depicting actual life in the ideal state has ever been made than that of Bellamy in "Looking Backward."¹ He therein conceives the conditions which would exist, did the dreams of the purest and most disinterested of mankind become realities, and demonstrates to the satisfaction of Julian West how the national plan would eliminate entirely all the unamiable traits of life in the nineteenth century. For the purpose of considering the details of the scheme he formulates, it is almost unnecessary to remark on the brief siesta which Julian West enjoyed

¹ The remainder of this chapter will be best understood by those who have read Bellamy's "Looking Backward."

compared with the amazing transformation scene which took place. Certainly it is one of the most remarkable scenic conceptions. If his dreamland is a possible reality it is immaterial whether, for illustrating the details of its working, he assumes one or ten centuries to elapse. We may, however, in passing, be pardoned for expressing surprise that considering the brief period that is supposed to have passed, the records of the nineteenth century and the manners and customs of the people are so little preserved, that the elucidation of them is elevated to something like an antiquarian research. No doubt it is considered the padding necessary for the easy running of the story, and also to form a sort of peg on which to hang those sapient criticisms on our system which were so freely indulged in by the benevolent Dr. Leete. The wealthy, learned clown, when he visited Lady Friendly, was delighted to find Sir Thomas such a well-read gentleman that their opinions on classical subjects were identical, but the value of Sir Thomas's confirmation of his views was considerably depreciated by that unfortunate edition of "Xenophon" in the library, which proved only a board with leather and

gilding made to represent the works of that classic. In the same way we are led to suspect that Dr. Leete's triumph in argument over Mr. West is due, not so much to either the soundness or unassailability of his theories as to the latter's entire ignorance of the whole questions brought up for discussion at the dinner-table. The strong room with its securities and gold are the mountings of the piece, and lend reality to the assumption that if the new order of things were established, the present capitalists would be its most ardent converts, although they are the ones that would be most injuriously affected.

We say most injuriously affected, but all would suffer by the change, which would destroy man's noblest feature, self-reliance, and ensure all being drilled into being mere automatons to dance to whatever tune the State elected to play. The industrial army, into whose ranks all are pressed regardless of their tastes, is a bold conception, and we can only regret that after having its formation so elaborately described, we are not treated to a glimpse of its practical work.

This is a most significant omission, which leads

us to the conclusion that its actual operation defied even the genius of Bellamy to paint. The only operator, indeed, to whom we are introduced is that exemplary waiter who conducted himself in such a dignified manner at the doctor's dining-table, and that leads to the remark that attending to the wants of the inner man seemed the main work of that ideal State. One cannot but sympathise with the worthy doctor in his eulogy on the perfection to which they had brought the culinary art; but at the same time he showed a wise discretion in not introducing his guests to the kitchen where the feast was prepared, as, considering the magnitude of the task, a perfect bedlam of confusion must have prevailed. Even in an ordinary restaurant, the preparation of dinner for a few dozens is not accomplished without taxing the tempers and patience of the attendants; but what would it be in such a gigantic establishment as is represented, and in which the whole district dines, not *table-d'hôte*, but each according to his own taste, and in his own private apartment? The imagination fails us in trying to conceive the feat; and while we may

admire its comprehensiveness, we deny the possibility of its accomplishment. Each member of the State is possessed of exactly the same income, man, woman and child, no matter what contribution to the general well-being of the State may be made, and an entirely novel standard by which to judge their worth is erected. No longer are we to estimate the value of conduct by the effect on the community at large; but henceforth the only claim to merit is the intention or inclination of the performer.¹ A man may undertake a task for which he is altogether incompetent, but if he conscientiously endeavours to perform it, he is more deserving of credit than him who, with an aptitude for it, gives greater results, but does not exercise himself so faithfully.

No autocrat ever exercised the arbitrary power which is vested in this ideal State with its necessarily hydra-headed management. The child is removed from the parents' control, and rendered independent of them from the earliest time. Its education is conducted by the State,

¹ In such a state, killing would frequently be no murder, and an effective justification of persecution would be forthcoming.

and its labour subject to State control. For twenty-one years school is attended rigorously, and a learned education acquired, but on arrival of that fateful time, each is enrolled in the industrial army. No question as to what task he was most competent to perform was asked, but for three years he was compelled to follow those menial and unskilled employments for which his attainments surely would not qualify him. We are, of course, assured that the word menial had no longer any significance, owing to the conception being one of perfect equality, and the most ordinary tasks being as requisite as the more refined. Would such a training qualify men better for the tasks of life than our present methods? We know practically that the best way to disqualify men for the following of manual or mechanical employments is to defer starting until they have reached something like mature years. The habits are then formed, and it is impossible that anyone who has attended a collegiate course till that time, would gracefully become a waiter or a road sweeper, and it would be the most refined cruelty to insist upon them being so after the very different manner in which they had

been educated. After the expiration of the three years, they were permitted to select some skilled trade to which they became apprenticed at the age of twenty-four. This special trade is no better paid than any other, no matter what skill or talent its pursuit involves, and naturally we should imagine, therefore, that the most agreeable and easily acquired trades would receive a surplus of volunteers, and this would be the inevitable consequence if the theoretical perfect equality of reward was maintained. A variety, therefore, is of necessity introduced, and owing to the impossibility of this taking a monetary shape, the expedient is resorted to of equalising advantages by extending or reducing the hours of labour, and so minimising the attractiveness of the one avocation, and increasing that of the other naturally less agreeable. This is but a clumsy substitute for our own practice, which rewards in strict accordance with the value of the services to the community. The business of the administration, however, is to see that there is always an ample supply of volunteers for each employment, and consequently a close watch is kept on the rate of volunteering to each, and constant modi-

fications of the conditions appertaining to each takes place, so as to preserve an equality. These modifications would seem to us unjust to those who were already following the trade. They had been induced to join it by its apparently greater attractiveness, and when their choice was made, and no retreat possible, the conditions of employment are so changed as to deprive them of the advantages which they had reckoned on receiving. An entire absence of permanency in arrangement is foreign to our conception of a possibly happy and contented State, and there would certainly be greater discontent arising from the continued compulsory alterations, than what exists under our own *régime*, where the rewards of labour are left to adjust themselves naturally, and depend entirely upon society's own estimate of the worth of the services. A still more remarkable thing is that in such an ideally perfect State such provisions were found necessary, and does not confirm Dr. Leete's somewhat inflated boast that "the organisation of society no longer offers a premium on baseness." Human nature had evidently not changed, and the greatest care had to be exercised to prevent

the possibility of advantages over each other being taken. Where could the Board be found in such a State who would use their power impartially, and how would they estimate the value of their own services as to time? The doctor informs Mr. West that "if any occupation was so arduous and oppressive that, in order to induce volunteers, the day's work in it had to be reduced to ten minutes, it would be done." Nothing but a dreamer could conceive of occupations being carried on under such circumstances: such a relay of workers would be requisite; and there are few works in which another can take up the task where left by his predecessor, and carry it on towards completion. Certainly if each were only to devote ten minutes per day to it, we should be far from expecting accurate work.

The immense industrial establishments which we are asked to conceive as existing, each equalling one hundred or so of our present private concerns, does not seem at all feasible. We know that the greatest drawback of our moderately large establishments is the distance which men have to traverse before enter-

ing upon their work; but under the supposed conditions these distances would be so greatly increased, that it would be scarcely practicable to have the men conveyed to and from their work.

Women were entirely relieved from the burden of housework, but were made to contribute in other, and more effectual, as well as more agreeable ways, to the common weal; but with a convenient disregard for details we are not informed how the former can be altogether dispensed with, nor the latter accomplished. There is a general statement that the washing is done at public laundries, cooking at public kitchens, and the making and repairing of wearing apparel in public shops. But surely the various operations are not performed without workers, and so far from such an arrangement reducing, it would increase the amount of work to be accomplished. A whole army of carriers would be necessary to convey the entire articles to and from the various establishments, and an immense number of clerks to record the particulars of the goods, etc., belonging to or required by the householders. The success of the general cooking at public kitchens would be some-

what destroyed during the conveyance to the houses, and possible collisions might be expected in the bustle attending the operations which would take place presumably for all families at the same hour.

According to the ideas prevailing amongst the inhabitants of this wonderful dreamland, none of our present methods of conducting the work of the world is right; in fact, when not morally wrong, they are stupidly inefficient. The very motives by which mankind are now influenced are assumed to be base, and most elaborate precautions are taken to deprive the possibility of any one obtaining advantages over their neighbours. Labour is not compulsory, it is inevitable, says Dr. Leete, and to refuse to work is to be shut off from human society. The only extra reward which can be obtained is the esteem of your fellows, and the measurement of worth is not results, but intentions, a much less reliable standard. It is also a ladies' paradise, for, being altogether independent of men, they are permitted to absolutely equal rights, even to popping the question. There is no moral objection to the plan, but it might prove embarrassing, and is so

foreign to our ideas of etiquette that we are appalled at the prospects which it would hold in store for us. It is unnecessary to follow the worthy doctor through all his comparisons of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Suffice it to say that, viewed from his standpoint, the scheme he eulogised had much of what was admirable in its construction. It did not, however, alter the inherently unequal conditions of men and their distinctively different rewards. In fact, the common error of all social reforms is very pronounced, and that is the belief that it is in external circumstances alone that happiness is possible. Nothing, in reality, has less to do with the matter, and the ploughman may occasionally—frequently, perhaps—enjoy that comfort and contentment which is denied to him who wears a crown.

The economical tenets advanced by the book are not likely to become classical. It is a generally accepted axiom that nothing really goes to waste, but we are informed that in our industrial system there are four great wastes resulting from leaving the conduct of industry to irresponsible individuals. To the ordinary

mind there does not seem any consistency in this assumption, as in the other portion of the book we are informed it was the weight of responsibility consequent upon the management of capital and labour, that made existence in the preceding age not worth having. If men did not feel responsibility when the immediate effects concern themselves and their families, it would scarcely be very active in a State where no undesirable consequence could result from mismanagement, so long as the bulk of the contemporaries were satisfied that the intention was not blamable.

The first waste mentioned is that of mistaken undertakings. The assumption is made that the projector of a given enterprise had no general view of the field of industry and consumption, but this is entirely unfounded. No man enters upon any enterprise without having a fairly accurate knowledge of the requirements of the community in that direction, and the fact that failure occasionally attends his efforts would not be a waste to the community. It would transfer his claim to a given quantum of wealth from himself to the community at large, but it surely would not therefore be wasted.

In fact the fortunes of the individuals inside a State may fluctuate very widely in relation to each other at different periods, and the State itself be nothing the poorer, so that the consequence of the error does not poverise the State, but the individual only. The waste of competition is still less consonant with the facts, as any one who has considered the laws of industry will realise. If all men in the same trade fraternised as comrades instead of regarding each other as rivals, there would simply prevail monopoly prices for their products. The competition which leads to the reduction of prices is surely more beneficial to the community as a whole, than any combination for maintaining them, which would simply give the manufacturers, so combining, a greater relative return than what was obtained in other trades not federated in the same way. It is a purely romantic conception that the day-dream of the nineteenth century producer is to gain absolute control of the supply of some necessity of life, so that he might keep the public on the verge of starvation. The interest of those providing for the wants of the community might be to keep it on the verge of starvation,

were it not for that competition which prevails, and which ensures the conflicting personal interest always bringing the prices, not alone of necessities, but of luxuries, to the lowest point at which they can be produced ; and any attempt at increasing this minimum rate would rectify itself by inducing further competition in that particular department ; for the duty is not entrusted to a particular class, but is open to every citizen who thinks he possesses the necessary qualification. The waste from periodical gluts and crises is non-existent ; there is a cessation of production, but this is quite distinct from waste, and only implies that labour has become so effective that continuous exertion is no longer requisite for supplying all human wants. True, there are many who could use much more than they obtain, but they are not able to give such a return of service to society as to enable it to produce for them. The fourth waste indicated by the good doctor was that of idle capital and labour. The fact that capital is idle is simply an indication that there is accumulated a greater amount of it than can be usefully employed. The devices which have accom-

panied civilisation have greatly increased natural productiveness, and so facilitated the growth of population; but there is a limit to this, and it is a consequence of this limit being reached that renders capital inoperative, unless when new fields of enterprise are opened, or valuable inventions introduced, which, for a time, eases the depression which is an inevitable result of a densely populated country. Capital is therefore not wasted in such cases; it is not consumed, and so it is not necessary to be replaced, and receives while in this state no interest. Labour is not wasted; there is a surplus over what is required, and that is practically valueless. It is immaterial whether a certain number go without employment, and are supported by those who are working, or whether all are employed for a shorter period and receive the same amount in the aggregate, but less, individually, than the present workers. There is no evading the relentless dictum that the poor ye shall have with you alway.

A national system of co-operation would completely destroy individual responsibility by removing

all incentive to industry; human character would be dwarfed by the removal of its noblest feature, self-reliance; energy would be sapped, and men would become little better than automatons, and an indolent and degenerate race would succeed the present active and enterprising generation. The knowledge that under the new order of things all were assured of a sufficiency of the good things of life, irrespective of personal effort, would result in a diminution of the desire of discovering improved methods; scientific investigation would languish, and the retrogression of humanity would be inevitable. Besides this, if those for whose especial benefit the scheme is devised, had it fairly explained to them, they would join in its denunciation. Tell those who at present earn a livelihood by casual work, and the numbers in large cities are by no means inconsiderable, that in future they will not be permitted to live this free and easy existence, but must confine themselves to some certain avocation for which by temperament they are usually unsuited, and will they unite with you? Tell those who at present are supported by the enforced charity of the comfortable

without any exertion, that henceforward they must return in work an equivalent to their maintenance, and will they consider this an improvement? This indeed is an essential difference between the national plan and our own. The former does not intend to support any but those that will be compelled to contribute to the welfare of the community, while at present we support vast numbers who do not labour. Economically, the latter is the correct method, as pauper labour would quickly disturb the balance of trade, and so far from elevating would reduce all to the level of paupers.

The conclusion which must be arrived at, in respect of all those dreamlands which philanthropic economists have depicted is, that they would require so much minute arrangements; so much would have to be compulsory, and so much, if harmony were to prevail, or justice be maintained, would depend upon voluntary action, that their successful adoption this side the millennium cannot be conceived as practicable.



LOOKING FORWARD.

I take it that the good of mankind means the attainment by every man of all the happiness which he can enjoy without diminishing the happiness of his fellow-men.

If we inquire what kinds of happiness come under this definition, we find those derived from the sense of security or peace; from wealth or commodity, obtained by commerce; from Art—whether it be architecture, sculpture, painting, music or literature; from knowledge or science; and finally, from sympathy or friendship. No man is injured, but the contrary, by peace. No man is any the worse off because another acquires wealth by trade, or by the exercise of a profession; on the contrary, he cannot have acquired his wealth, except by benefiting others to the full extent of what they considered to be its value; and his wealth is no more than fairy gold, if he does not go on benefiting others in the same way.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY—*Administrative Nihilism.*

LOOKING FORWARD.

HAVING now for a period roamed, with some degree of freedom, through the romantic dreamlands which have peopled the imagination of those disinterested philanthropists who have no doubt honestly desired to leave the world better than they found it, we may again descend to the region of actual life, and endeavour to discover the goal to which humanity may attain. It will be well, however, to briefly and succinctly summarise the conclusions to which our investigation has tended. The idea in view, no matter how imperfectly we may have developed it, has been, that society as existing is not alone the natural, but that it is the only possible at present. This opinion originates in a consideration of human history and development, and in a knowledge of human nature, which can be verified by each inquirer. The characteristics of our system which are apparently in-

equitable, and consequently specially attacked by reformers, exist by reason of the hitherto unquestioning acceptance of principles which are inseparable from association. In the complexity of the civilised State an analysis of the essentials of society, which few popular reformers take the time to make, is necessary to the recognition of what they really consist of, and of their imperativeness, but in the earlier stages they are realised and assented to intuitively. The principles are those of individual freedom and justice, which few would care knowingly to oppose; but yet the laws of social intercourse are so little appreciated, that doctrines destructive of these principles find acceptance and advocacy from many who would shrink from being identified with an open attack on these. Freedom in a social State is different from natural freedom, owing to the tacit agreement, which existence in the State implies, of observing the rights of your neighbour with the same exactitude as you guard your own; and while Government, therefore, is not restricting freedom by insisting on restraining everything inimical to the general welfare of the community, where this is con-

served individual freedom must not in any way be curtailed. Bearing the saving clause in mind, we find that the essential principles demand that each individual should be permitted to exercise their powers in the way most conducive to their own welfare, and that absolute protection in the enjoyment of the results must be assured before they will begin to accumulate those reserves which are indispensably necessary to progress, or even to existence in association. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is only when the reserves become very extensive, that any hardship is experienced, and it is then due quite as much to the fact that the adaptation of Nature to the wants of man is approaching the limit which is fixed by the discovery of improvements. A new invention may for a time ease the pressure by introducing a fresh outlet for capital, and the bringing of fresh territory under cultivation will have the same effect, but these are not illimitable possibilities, and the struggle for existence becomes intensified as population continues to increase while they diminish. The conferring on each of the absolute right to deal with

the fruits of his own toil, leads to the reserves becoming possessed by the comparatively few, who have what has been called the effective desire of accumulation largely developed, and their offspring are introduced into the world under the most favourable circumstances, not only in respect of material goods, but also in regard to habits of frugality and thrift inherited. This transmission of the results of past inequality often causes the existing conditions of men to be entirely irreconcilable with their apparent mental, moral or physical differences, and discontent arises spontaneously out of the hardships which many endure through no fault of their own, and the superfluous luxury which others enjoy without any special deserts. Still there is not in this any inequity, as a constant intermingling of classes occurs in our free country, so that anyone possessing real merit is likely to find a market for it, and, like Claude Melnotte, "buy his ransom from the twin jailors of the daring heart—low birth and iron fortune." Interference with the laws of exchange of labour is unnatural and destitute of advantage, as when

exercised in all departments of industry, it simply means a permanent increase in the price of all commodities; and if only a few are included in its operation, the followers of that description of employment enrich themselves at the expense of the other members of the community, and to be able to continue to do so, must interfere with individual liberty by refusing to allow the numbers which the favouring conditions would draw to enter their ranks, and so compel them to adopt avocations for which they have less aptitude, and so inflict a real wrong on the community, by depriving it of services which, if left free to select work according to personal inclination, would have a much higher rate of efficiency. The direct tendency is to establish caste distinctions, owing to the unwritten law observed of accepting as apprentices to given trades the sons of those at present following them. This at first sight seems a just arrangement, but it is difficult to conceive how popular favour can be extended to anything possessing to such a large extent the elements of real slavery.

The proposed remedies of the assumed inequities of social life, while voicing sentiments in every way creditable, originate in that dangerous thing—a little knowledge of the subject—and deal exclusively with the most superficial aspects. Whatever advantage might be obtained in a given direction by their introduction would be counteracted by the evil effects in others, as social forces act and react on each other in such equal and opposite directions as to maintain the *status quo* of advantage. That the conditions of existence in civilised society seem improved is due to our different requirements of existence, and the different standards which we have erected; but, none the less, qualities have become rudimentary which made existence in the earlier stages of life quite as tolerable as what ours is with all its education, refinement, and power. The happiness and contentment of our race, though in some circumstances inseparable from surroundings, are by no means indissolubly connected with them, as adaptability and adjustment of means to ends enables man to extract in most cases the essentials of desirable life, whatever the externals.

The cause of the periodical depression in trade is overproduction; though the popular teacher of political philosophy will immediately demolish this statement to his own and hearers' satisfaction by demanding with all theatrical rhetoric—overproduction of what? Of bread—while men and women, aye, and little children starve? Of boots and stockings—while thousands have none to wear? Of clothing—while many go shivering along our streets for want of some to shield them from the piercing blast? We cannot deny that these interrogatories correctly represent the facts of social life, irreconcilable as they must at first sight appear to the statement that it is overproduction which causes social troubles. Under the at first favouring conditions of civilisation the race increases in such a rapid ratio, that the numbers begin to be disproportionate to the sustenance possible to be raised in the immediate area. Even the most careful and arduous labour will not secure from the soil supplies to keep pace with the multiplying population, and the consequent competition for what is produced leads to the survival and propagation of those most fitted for the conditions of life. It

does not, however, immediately eliminate those not so well qualified, but reduces them to the least favourable positions, and this in proportion to their adaptability. The grades or stratas of society are therefore determined by the qualities of those who form them, and as these can never become uniform, such grades or stratas must, so far as human prescience goes, continue while time lasts. The competition, which is induced by the increasing difficulty of obtaining a livelihood, is far from being disadvantageous, as, being equally active in all departments of life, it gives to the workers in cheapness of goods what it deprives them of by cheapening their labour. Besides this it sharpens the intellect and makes men resourceful, active, and self-reliant, if they are to be successful; and where these qualities cannot be induced it renders their existence less desirable, and so tends to diminish the numbers of that class which shall be produced. The evolution of the species to higher and still higher levels must be through this source, and, as the requirements of life become more exacting, the dross of humanity finds existence increasingly difficult, and, just in proportion to the progress of

the most intellectual, does their comparative condition become to all appearance more miserable. That humanity is destined to be continuously progressive is a proposition which may be advanced with the greatest confidence, notwithstanding the fact that research into the history of antiquity discloses a higher degree of attainment amongst the inhabitants of the ancient nations than what the subsequent barbaric conditions into which mankind sunk would lead us to expect. Reflection on this may lead to the conclusion which, indeed, has been often expressed, that there is nothing in our civilisation so essentially different to what prevailed in ancient times to ensure that retrogression may not take place, and after we attain a certain standard disintegration ensue, and anarchy and despotism for a time become supreme, after which the cycle of improvement will again reappear and complete its unvarying course. We cannot see any reason for giving our adhesion to this theory, because modern civilisation differs very materially from anything which has preceded it.

The means of perpetuating knowledge are the most
O

complete, and the portion of the world peopled by the European race is of such an extent that unless a cataclasm were to engulf the universe, the continuity of attainment is assured. Admitting, therefore, that we are on a path of improvement from which we are not likely to depart, the question naturally arises, Shall we have the poor with us always? We have the very highest authority for answering this in the affirmative, but were this not the case, what would be the logical deduction from the observed facts? No matter what form of society were established, rivalry would naturally prevail owing to the disposition of each to secure for himself the most elevated position. No one would voluntarily perform the menial offices of social life, and they would naturally devolve upon those who had failed in competition with their fellows to secure the more prominent and honourable employment, and who would consequently be forced by the exigencies of circumstances to be the "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and so be the poor of that society. Such poverty would not be inconsistent with fairly high educational acquirements, and would perhaps be more the penalty of individual

inferiority than what is at present current. To make it so would be the legitimate duty of the State, and without transgressing its proper function it might take under its care the education of the people. This, while not attempting the impossible task of constituting an artificial equality, would still give to each a more nearly equal start in life. No attempt at making the individuals exact counterparts of each other, or restraining the natural powers or aptitudes should be made, as there is nothing more foreign to our ideas of justice and freedom than what such an extreme system of regimentation would imply. Consequently the natural result of the improved arrangements would be a greatly exalted standard of life, but a not appreciable reduction of those in menial places, while each had a chance of qualifying for the highest. A very desirable state of affairs, and as nearly as possible approximated to by our Government at present, which has shown itself particularly alert to the interests of the people at large. To the people themselves, however, we must look for permanent improvement, which will not take place by them seizing the governmental reins and governing for their own especial

benefit. If such a course were pursued it would not ensure a general amelioration of lots, but simply a displacing of the existing aristocratic body, and the establishing of one from amongst the present leaders of the people, who, elated by their success, would become as intolerable and autocratic towards their former companions as the most supercilious of the present aristocrats. The most effective plan, and that to which we should strenuously direct attention, is the elevation of the standard of comfort amongst the masses. The more we educate, the more we shall contribute to this, which is not the least important advantage of education. By so doing, we shall contribute to keep population within the limits of luxurious subsistence, and increase the natural value of all human labour by maintaining an equilibrium between the work to be done and the workers. Arbitrary exactions would then be impossible, and the giving of labour would be realised to be as important a service as the providing of capital. This does not imply that it is not so in reality at all times, but only that the numbers who are willing to offer it are so disproportionate to the work as to depreciate both the market value

and the estimation in which labour is held. To the restriction of generation, and the restraining of immigration, we look forward, therefore, as the true solution of the problem of pauperism, as the State that contains within itself the means of sustenance for all its inhabitants without the necessity of importing foreign produce is the only one that is not overpopulated, and consequently none of its citizens would experience the depths of degradation which, unfortunately, are too common in modern States, where the congestion which is partially relieved by the exploiting of new areas is likely to be even more intensely felt when this outlet ceases, as it must, and now is ceasing.

THE END.







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